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IMMORTALITY IN PLATO  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT  
AND  
IN MODERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

by  
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Thesis

Submitted in the Department of  
Philosophy of Religion and  
Christian Theology in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Pacific School of Religion.


May 1934

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## Chapter I

### Immortality in Plato.

#### I

Speculation about the nature, origin, and destiny of the human soul is a more primitive thing than any formal philosophy, and dates from the childhood of every race. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul among the Greeks appears first in the Homeric poems, which, in spite of their finished art and the rich material civilization they reflect, show thought at an early and simple stage. In Homer mental and spiritual processes are normally associated with the body or its several organs; but in connection with the phenomenon of death we find the theory of a separable soul, which flits away from the body, bewailing its fate and leaving the man himself a lifeless corpse, and thereafter the soul has a shadowy and joyless existence in Hades. When a ghost revisits earth, it is always with lamentation for the contrast between real life in the body on earth and its miserable counterpart among the dead. This remains the background of popular Greek belief, and here from the first the



Greek tendency to clear cut, concrete expression and thought is illustrated. The soul is regarded as a "thing", separable from the body, retaining consciousness after death, but bereft of all that makes life desirable.

The Religious movement, known as Orphism, which arose in the sixth century B.C. and profoundly influenced Greek thought, reversed in every respect but one this early and popular theory. To the Orphics the soul is indeed still a thing, distinct and separable from the body; but the keynote of the system is the soul's divine origin and native purity and worth, and the degradation it suffers by sojourn within the body, its "tomb" or "prison". Soul is immortal, and passes from one incarnation to another; its release from the taint of bodily life is to be effected by a system of "purification" involving both inward regeneration and the observance of ritual and sacrament. The purified soul can thus in the end attain mystic union with God, and escape from the "grievous woful circle" of successive incarnations. Thus in Orphism the whole emphasis is changed. It is the soul that matters, not the body; and the soul is a personality, essentially akin to God and capable of realising that kinship.

The earliest speculative thinkers of Greece, the Ionian monists, were roughly contemporary with the rise of Orphism,





but represented a very different temper. Their scientific inquiries into the material substructure of the world take little account of the moral and spiritual problems of human life. Heraclitus is the only Ionian who speaks about our subject. He, attacking the problem of knowledge, insists on the unreliability of sense-perception (since the material world is in ceaseless flux) and speaks obscurely of a "Reason" or "Word" (Λόγος) which is "common" and which all souls may apprehend. He seems to combine the faculties of sensation and reason under his conception of soul, but does not stress the idea of an individual "thing". He recognised its potentialities at least, for he says, "The soul's bounds you may never find, though you search every way."<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary with Heraclitus new philosophic movements arose in the Western Greek world of Sicily and South Italy; and here in one direction Orphism became very influential. The Pythagorean brotherhood adopted the theory of transmigration and prescribed for the soul's good a system of ascetic discipline. They took up their famous mathematical studies apparently as a factor in "purification". Thus philosophy gained a new motive, aspiration to a better life for the soul; and, conversely, intellectual discipline was brought into the service of religion and morality. The soul

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Hibbert Journal Vol. XX p. 77





was supposed to exist either in the form of a magnet, or of a particle of fire, or of light, or air, or water, or of a number, or of a harmony of numbers, or to be or have, like the stars, a principle of motion. ( See Aristotle *Περὶ Ψυχῆς*. 1: 1, 2, 3 ).

At length Anaxagoras hardly distinguishing between life and Mind, or between Mind, human and divine, attained the idea of the soul as a pure abstraction; and this, like the other abstractions of Greek philosophy, sank deep into the human intelligence. The opposition of the intelligible and the sensible, and of God to the world, supplied an analogy which assisted in the separation of soul and body. If ideas were separable from phenomena, mind was also separable from matter; if the ideas were eternal, the mind that conceived them was eternal too. As the unity of God was more distinctly acknowledged, the conception of the human soul became more developed.

The barren monism of Parmenides did not touch human problems; but he influenced later theory by his conception of an absolute object of knowledge (distinct from objects of sense) and his contrast between such "knowledge" of the One and "opinion" about the Many of the Material world. With the pluralists who followed his philosophy returned into scientific lines. Empedocles curiously combined an Orphic



belief in the soul's transmigration (he calls himself "an exile from heaven and a wanderer"): with a purely scientific interest in the problems of sensation, which he solves on a materialist basis by a naive theory of "emanations" which pass off from the perceptible object to the sentient subject. He exhibits the tendency to range on the one side the religious and moral faculties as the "soul" detachable from the body, and on the other side the sense faculty as part of the bodily organism itself. In the crude theory of evolution which he puts forward he seems to make no attempt to correlate the germ of life with the soul as he otherwise conceived it.

Anaxagoras (who also embodied in his atomistic system a theory of sensation by material contact): made a real and important contribution to Greek thought about soul, in connection with his dictum, "All things were mixed together; then Mind came and sorted them out." He first introduces the conception of a moving cause which is *Noûs* — Mind, intelligence, reasoning thought. Mind gradually brings cosmos out of chaos; it personifies the reasonable order of things, and has the attributes of God in the aspect of creator and organiser. It is indeed, as Plato and Aristotle complain, a mere *Deus ex Machina*, starting the cosmic movement and then leaving the process to go on mecha-



nically. A curious feature of the theory is that Mind is described in material terms; it consists of a specially fine and pure kind of particles. It imparts from without a rotatory movement to the mass of matter, and also pervades it everywhere. Anaxagoras is clearly baffled by the problem of the action of an immaterial force upon material substance. It is important to our inquiry that he distinctly says that all mind is the same substance. There is, then, affinity between all intelligent creatures; he mentions that man is superior to the beasts in having hands\_ not, it seems, by reason of a special sort of intelligence. Further, there is affinity between all creatures and the supreme Mind of the World. Heraclitus may have had the germ of this idea, but his world-reason was a vague conception compared with the theory of a conscious intelligence ordering the universe. Thus Anaxagoras is the first to affirm clearly in the sphere of intellect that kinship of human (and infra-human) and divine which the Orphics had affirmed is the sphere of moral and spiritual life.

The Atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, were consistent materialists, and declared soul to be made of a particular kind of fine round atoms, mixed with the body in life, breathed out of death, and dispersed like the rest of the body to be used again in the formation of other living crea-





tures. There is no place here for transmigration or divine affinity; life is just a form of bodily development. Sensation is again explained on a theory of material contact; the intelligent and moral faculties are not explained at all.

These Scientific philosophers of the fifth century B.C. are contemporary with the humanistic movement of the Sophists, who represented another side of the reaction from barren metaphysical speculation. They had found a new interest in all moral and political problems; and their characteristic contribution is Protagoras' maxim "Man (i.e. the individual) is the measure of all things." This applies to human judgment and conduct the theory of Heraclitus that in a changing world all is unstable and relative. The Sophists, destructive and specious as much of their work was, did immense service to the progress of thought by fixing attention on the life of the human being as a reasoning and moral individual. Socrates, with far greater earnestness of purpose, insisted on this as the primary study, and obviously believed in a soul in the sense of a responsible moral entity. His maxim "Virtue is knowledge," does not impair the moral significance of all his teaching; for he declared it a duty to seek that knowledge which would ensure right action. His simple life and disregard of externals emphasised his belief that soul is more important than body; and his fearless



pursuit of his ideal through life and up to the hazard of death, with his cheerful and amazing courage in the hour of his execution, would seem to have given one at least of his disciples a new conviction of the reality, the divine kinship, and the certain immortality of the human soul. This disciple was Plato.

## II

Plato's conception of the soul is a matter of prime importance. Again and again he emphasises, by one method or another, the divine origin and the high calling and destiny of the individual human personality. Gathering up what was best and most characteristic in previous Greek thought on the question, he gave forth a doctrine which through many channels has had immeasurable influence on human life. His theory of soul is not merely a philosophy; it is a Gospel. As has been mentioned, Plato in his theory of soul, gathers up and fuses into one various conclusions of his predecessors. Living in an age when logic was beginning to mould human thought, he naturally cast his belief in immortality into a logical form. He believes in a soul, a "thing" in some sense, and in same sense and at some times separable from the body. This soul is of divine origin; its function is, in thought, to correlate divine absolute reality (apprehended by pure knowledge) with the appearances of the material world (apprehended by sensation); and by means of will



to impel the body (so long as the soul inhabits the body) to action harmonious with the soul's thought. The destiny of the soul is assimilation to the divine principle whence it came, in an immortal life apart from the body and from the material world. Plato is, in fact, the first to offer any real account of the individual personality as a whole. He does not attempt to show that personality exists. He takes for granted the existence of the self; indeed he takes three fundamental facts for granted — the divine origin and affinity of the self, implying upward aspiration and progress for every human being; the fact of consciousness, both of the world and of oneself; and the fact of free will and moral responsibility. On these foundations his system is based.

### III

Plato emphasizes self-activity. "Every soul," he says, "is immortal. That which is always in motion is from eternity, but that which is moved by another must have an end." Unless the soul continues endlessly, the universe must cease to work and to exist.

"Ψυχή πᾶσα ἀθάνατος. Τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον· τὸ δ' ἄλλο κινουὺν καὶ ὑπ' ἄλλου κινούμενον πᾶσαν ἔχον





κινήσεως, παῦλαν ἔχει ζωῆς. Μόνον δὲ αὐτό κινεῖται, ἅτε οὐκ ἀπολειπὸν ἑαυτό, οὔποτε λήγει κινούμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα κινεῖται, τοῦτο πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχὴ κινήσεως. Ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀγέννητον. Ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀνάγκη πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον γίγνεσθαι, αὐτὴν δὲ μηδ' ἐξ ἐνός. Εἰ γὰρ ἔκ του ἀρχῇ γίγνοιτο, οὐκ ἂν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γίγνοιτο. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀγέννητον ἐστίν, καὶ ἀδιάφθορον αὐτό ἀνάγκη εἶναι<sup>1</sup>.

"Every soul is immortal. Because that which is ever moving is immortal. but that which moves another and is moved by another, when it ceases to move, ceases to live. Only that which moves itself, since it does not leave itself, never ceases to move, but is also the fountain and beginning of motion for all other things which have motion. Moreover beginning is unbegotten. Because every thing that is begotten is necessary to be begotten from a beginning. but the beginning is not begotten from anything. because if it were begotten from something, it would not be begotten from a beginning. And since it is unbegotten, it is necessary also indestructible." <sup>1</sup>

In this passage Plato asserts the pre-existence as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedrus 245. C.



the immortality of the soul; and in the East these two doctrines always went together,; they are ascribed to Pythagoras; the soul and the body being supposed to have only a temporary connection, to answer a particular purpose.

"The soul existed" says Pythagoras, "before bodies were produced, and it is the chief agent in the changes and the ornament of the body."<sup>1</sup>

In the Republic the argument is from the moral side and insists on personal survival. To everything there is a special vice of infirmity attached, by which, and which alone, that thing can be destroyed. Thus, blindness destroys the eyesight, mildew destroys corn, rot destroys timber. The peculiar infirmities, attached to the soul, are injustice, intemperance, cowardice, ignorance. Can these bring about the dissolution of the soul? No, certainly not; for they cannot destroy the soul immediately, as a disease destroys the body; though they may be, mediately, the cause of a man's being put to death by other people; — which is quite a different thing. But if wickedness cannot destroy the soul, nothing else can; therefore the soul is immortal.<sup>2</sup>

Although Plato holds that the soul in its essence does

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Charles S. Stanford's *Phaedo; or The Immortality of the soul*, p.131.

<sup>2</sup> Republic, X. 608 C-611A.



not die with the body he modifies this statement somewhat. When we assert the immortality of the soul he points out, we must remember that this immortality only belongs to it in its true nature, and that on earth we never see it in its true nature. The soul as it exists in union with the human body is emphatically a composite thing, and the composition is by no means perfect, so that the soul as it appears in its earthly life is liable to all kinds of internal distraction and inconsistency. The ideal condition of the soul is one of harmony and perfect synthesis, and this is unattainable under the conditions of human life; so that, as we see the soul here, its original nature is almost entirely obscured, like the human form of the sea-god Glaucus in the myth, by overgrowths which come upon it when it enters the body. If we want to see the immortal part of the soul we must look at the element of philosophy which is in it; we must imagine what the soul would be if it could entirely follow the impulse of philosophy, which would lift it out of this sea in which it is now sunk and show us its real nature.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Republic Book X 611 B - 612 A. See also 519 B, where Plato represents the soul as fettered with leaden weights attached to it at birth, which mean the affections to which the body makes the soul liable; and 518 E, where reason is the divine





The soul, then, whatever metamorphosis it may undergo when it enters the body, is in essential part of it immortal. Hence the Republic, which may be regarded (612 A ) as a picture of the states which the soul undergoes and the forms which it assumes in human life, its highest aspirations, its lowest descents, and the intermediate forms of life between, fittingly concludes with the prospect that lies before the soul after death.

In Timaeus (90: A to D) Plato asserts that in coming to understand the laws of nature, e.g. of the motion of the stars, the soul on earth gets some sort of anticipation of its own true life and nature.

#### IV

The dialogue which particularly deals with the problem of immortality is Phaedo. Here Socrates instructs us how to die, and what thoughts to entertain at the hour of death. By explaining his own views and aims, which were the spring of all his actions, he furnishes us with a proof of the most important of all truths, and of that which ought to regulate our life. For the immortality of the soul is of such importance that it includes all the truths of religion and

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thing in the soul, which however much perverted and rendered useless, still retains its ancient power.



all the motives that ought to excite and direct us.

Socrates spends the last day of his life in discoursing with his friends this great subject. He unfolds all the reasons that require the belief in the immortality of the soul, and refutes all the objections that arise to the contrary, — the very same that are made use of to this day. He demonstrates the hope his young friends ought to have of a happier life, and lays before them all that this blessed hope requires in order to make it solid and lasting, to prevent their being deluded by a vain hope and in the end meeting with the punishment allotted to the wicked instead of the rewards provided for the good.

# V

This conversation was occasioned by an assertion that was casually made, viz. that a true philosopher ought to desire death, and to strive toward it. This position taken literally, seemed to insinuate that a philosopher might lay violent hands on himself. But Socrates makes it out that there is nothing more unjust than suicide; and that for as much as man is God's creature and property, he ought not to remove himself out of this life without the Divine command. What is it then, that can make the philosopher



have such a love of death? It can be nothing but the hope of the good things in another life. Socrates is going

" παρὰ θεοῦς ἄλλους σοφοὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς, ἔπειτα καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώποις τετελευτηκότας ἀμείνους τῶν ἐνθάδε."

" amongst other gods, both wise and good, and further amongst men who have departed this life, far better than those here." <sup>1</sup>

What is the ground of this hope? Here we are presented with the first argument for the immortality of the soul. Socrates in presenting this first argument gives the astonishing definition of death that it is " the deliverance of the soul from the body."

" Καὶ εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ τεθνᾶναι, χωρὶς μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπαλλαγὲν αὐτό καθ' ἑαυτό τὸ σῶμα γεγονέναι, χωρὶς δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγεῖσθαι αὐτήν καθ' ἑαυτήν εἶναι."

" And is this ,then, death, the body being apart by itself, disunited from the soul, and the soul disunited from the body, existing apart by itself?" <sup>2</sup>

Man is born to know the truth, but he can never attain to

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo 63 B.

<sup>2</sup> Phaedo 64 C.





a perfect knowledge of it in this life, by reason of the fact that his body is an obstacle. Perfect knowledge is reserved for the life to come. Then the soul must be immortal, since after death it acts and knows. As for man's being born for the knowledge of truth, that cannot be called in question, since he was born to know God. From this it follows, that a true philosopher hates and contemns his body, since it stands in the way of his union with God; that he wishes to be rid of it, and looks upon death as a passage to a better life. This substantial hope gives birth to that true temperance and valour which is the lot of true philosophers; for otherwise men are only valiant through fear, and temperate through intemperance; their virtue is only a slave to vice.

## VI

Cebes objects to Socrates, that the soul is nothing but a vapour that vanishes and disperses at death.

"ὦ Σώκρατες, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ καλῶς λέγεσθαι, τὰ δὲ περὶ ψυχῆς πολλήν ἀπιστίαν παρέχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, μή, ἐπειδὴν ἀπαλλαγῇ τοῦ σώματος, οὐδαμῶς ἔτι ἢ, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διαφθείρηται τε καὶ ἀπόλλυται, ἢ ἂν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀποθνήσκη."



" Socrates, all else that you have said, appears to me to be said well, but those concerning the soul cause great incredulity among men, being afraid lest, but should perish, and be annihilated upon the same day on which a man dies."<sup>1</sup>

Socrates combats that opinion with one that has a great deal of force in his mouth, but becomes much stronger when supported by true religion, which alone can set it in its full light. The argument is this: in nature, contraries produce their opposites; the world is made up of "opposites" (ἐναντία) such as hot, cold; great, small; good, bad. Now if a thing "becomes bigger" it must have first been "smaller", if it becomes hotter it must have been cooler; if it becomes "better" it must have been "worse" and so on. So we may say universally that whatever comes to be, comes to be "out of its opposite" and that to correspond to each pair of opposites, there are two antithetical processes of "becoming". Hot and cold are opposites, and similarly there are the two processes of contrasted sense, "becoming hotter," and "becoming colder". All this will apply to the case of life and death. Being alive and being dead are opposites, just as being awake and being asleep are. And we have agreed that

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 70: A.



everything comes to be "out of its opposite". The living must come from the dead, and the dead from the living, and thus here, as elsewhere, there will be two opposed processes, corresponding to the two opposed conditions of being alive and being dead. We have a name for one of these processes, that by which a living being becomes dead; we call it dying. But there must, on our principle, also be an antithetic process of "coming to life" which terminates in actual birth. In fact, if the whole process were not cyclical, life would ultimately perish, and there would be only a dead universe left. Thus the drift of the argument is simply to confirm the "ancient doctrine" of rebirth by showing that it is only one case of the universal natural law of cyclical "recurrence".

## VII

The young Cebes wants a better proof and says to Socrates.

"Καὶ μὴν καὶ κατ' ἐκεῖνόν γε τὸν λόγον, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰ ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὃν σὺ εἴωθας θαμὰ λέγειν, ὅτι ἡμῶν ἡ μάθησις, οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ ἀνάμνησις τυγχάνει οὖσα, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτον, ἀνάγκη που ἡμᾶς ἐν προτέρῳ τινὶ χρόνῳ μεμαθηκέναι, ἃ νῦν ἀναμιμνησκομέθα. Τοῦτο δὲ ἀδύνατον, εἰμὴ ἦν που ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ, πρὶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ πίνῳ εἶδει γενέσθαι."

" And indeed, Socrates, according to that argument, if





a true one, which you are in the habit of using so frequently, that our knowledge is nothing else but reminiscence, according to this, I say, we must have learned at some former period what we remember now. But this is impossible, unless our souls existed before they appeared in this mortal form."<sup>1</sup>

This brings up the third argument, alleged by Socrates as a proof of the immortality of the soul, viz. that of remembrance. The great teacher takes the opportunity and gives the definition of learning thus:

" Ἡ καλουμένη μάθησις ἀνάμνησις ἐστίν ."

" The so-called learning is reminiscence."<sup>2</sup>

Cebes observed that we might have reached our conclusion, independently of the doctrine of recurrence, by arguing from Socrates' habitual position that what we call "learning " a truth is really being "put in mind" of something we had forgotten. If this is true, we must at one time have known all that in this life we have to be "reminded" of. Our souls must have existed "before we were men", and presumably therefore may continue to exist when we have ceased to be men.

The main argument for this doctrine of reminiscence is found in Meno. There we find that the soul must long ago

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 73 A.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 73 B



have "learned" everything, and only needs to be " put in mind" of something it has temporarily forgotten in order to regain its knowledge by diligent following of the clue provided by " reminiscence ". Learning in fact is just a process of "re-call" (ἀνάμνησις ).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor in his book Plato, says about this doctrine of " re-call ". As we are encountering the doctrine of "recol-lection" it is worthwhile to note what the exact point of it is. It must be observed that it is not a theory of "in-nate ideas" or "innate knowledge" in the peculiar sense of the words. We are not supposed to bring any actual knowledge into the world ready-made with us. On the contrary, we are said to "have learned" truth but to have lost it again, and we have to recover what we have lost. The recovery requires a real and prolonged effort of steady thinking; what "recol-lection" or more accurately" being reminded" does for us is to provide the starting point for this effort. In the Phaedo this is illustrated by the way in which chance "sso-ciations" will start a train of thinking, as when the sight of an absent friend's belongings or his portrait sets us thinking of the friend himself. The main emphasis thus falls not on the Orphic doctrine of pre-existence and re-incarna-tion, which Socrates professes to have learned from poets and priests, but on the function of sense-experience as



When you see an article belonging to an intimate friend, you not only see the article, but think of the owner, and that is what we mean by saying that the coat or whatever

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suggestive of and pregnant with truths of an intelligible order which it does not itself adequately embody or establish. And the philosophical importance of the doctrine is not that it proves the immortality of the soul, but that it shows that the acquisition of knowledge is not a matter of passively receiving "instruction" but one of following up a personal effort of thinking once started by an arresting sense-experience. But for this "suggestiveness" of sense-experience the *ignavia ratio* of the eristic," you cannot learn the truth from any teacher, because unless you know it already, you will not recognize it for the truth when he utters it," would be valid, we see, then, why both Socrates and Plato hold that "knowledge" can only be won by personal participation in "research"; it cannot simply be handed on from one man to another."





it is , " reminds " us of its owner. Again, when you see a portrait, you think of, or are reminded of the original. thus you may be "reminded" of something both by what is unlike it and by what is like it. In the second case we also note whether the likeness is complete or not ( e.g. whether the portrait is a good one or bad one)

Let us consider a precisely parallel case. In mathematics we are constantly talking about "equality" \_ not the equality of one stone to another stone, or of one wooden rod to another wooden rod, but of the "just equal" ( $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\iota}\sigma\omicron\nu$  ), which is neither wood nor stone\_ and we know that we mean something by this statement. But what has put the thought of the "just equal" into our minds? Of course the sight of equal sticks, or something of the kind. And we note two things.

a) The "just equal" is something different from a stick or a stone which is equal to another stick or stone; we see the sticks or stones, we do not see "mathematical equality".

b) And the so-called equal sticks or stones we do see are not exactly, but only approximately, equal. Thus plainly the objects about which the mathematician reasons are not perceived by the eye or the hand; the thought of them is suggested to him by the imperfect approximations he sees and touches, and this suggestion of B by A is exactly what we mean by "being reminded of B by A". But A cannot remind



us of B unless we have already been acquainted with B. Now from the dawn of our life here, our senses have always been thus "reminding us" of something which is not directly perceptible by sense. Hence our acquaintance with the standards themselves must go back to a time before our sensations began, i. e. to a time before our birth. We have argued the case with special reference to the objects studied by the mathematician, but it applies equally to all other "ideal standards" like those of ethics, the good, the right; in fact to every "form". The only alternative to supposing that we had antenatal acquaintance with these "forms" would be to say that we acquired it at the moment of birth. But this is absurd. Since we are quite agreed that we bring none of this knowledge into the world with us we have to recover it slowly enough from the hints and suggestions of the senses. We conclude then that if "the kind of being we are always talking about" that is the "forms" exist and if they are the standard by which we interpret all our sensations it must be equally true that our souls also existed and were actively intelligent before our birth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo 76 D - E.



## VIII

Socrates proceeds further to say to his friends that he is going to free them from the fear that the soul will vanish into air at the hour of death. "Like children, you are haunted with a fear that when the soul leaves the body, the wind may really blow her away and scatter her; especially if a man should happen to die in a great storm and not when the sky is calm."<sup>1</sup>

This remark made the friends of Socrates laugh but Cebes asked Socrates to free them from that fear and so we have the fourth argument for the immortality of the soul.

"Ἴσως ἔνι τις καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν παῖς, ὅστις τὰ τοιαῦτα φοβεῖται. Τοῦτον οὖν πειρώμεθα πείθειν μὴ δεδιέναι τὸν θάνατον, ὥπερ τὰ μορμολύκεια."

Perhaps there is and among us indeed a child who fears these things. Let us endeavour to persuade him not to be afraid of death, like a hobgoblin."<sup>2</sup>

This argument goes much more to the root of the question, since it is based not on any current general philosophical formula, but on consideration of the intrinsic character of a soul. This fourth argument in Aristotelian language

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 77, D.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 77, E.





is "physical" whereas the second, already mentioned, is "logical". The reasoning adopted lies at the bottom of all the familiar arguments of later metaphysicians who deduce the immortality of the soul from its alleged character as a "simple substance" — the "paralogism" attacked by Kant in *The Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>1</sup>

Simmias had spoken of the possible "dissipation" of the soul at death. Now what sort of thing is liable to dissipation and what not? Obviously it is the composite which, by its own nature, is liable to be dissipated; the incomposite, if there is such a thing, should be safe from such a fate. And it is reasonable to hold that whatever maintains one and the same character in all circumstances is incomposite, what is perpetually changing its character is composite. Thus for the crude contrast between the "simple" and the composite, we substitute the more philosophical antithesis between the permanent and the mutable. In the kind of being of which we speak in our scientific studies, the being we are always trying to define — the "forms", in fact — we have a standard of the absolutely immutable. "Just straight" "just right" "just good" are once and for all exactly what they are, and are invariable. But the many things which we call by the same names as the "forms" are in perpetual mutation.

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Plato.



Now these latter mutable things are all things you can touch, or see, or apprehend, by one or other of the senses. The immutable "standards" are one and all apprehensible only by thought (διανοίας λογισμῷ). This suggests that we may recognize two types of objects, each type having a pair of characters — the invisible and immutable, and the visible and mutable. Also we are agreed that we have a body and a soul. To which of our types does each of these belong? Clearly the body can be seen, the soul is invisible. In respect of this character there can be no doubt of the type to which each belongs.

What about the other pair of contrasted characters?

When the soul relies on the sense-organs in her investigations she finds the objects she is studying perpetually shifting, and loses her own way.

"καὶ αὐτὴ πλανᾶται καὶ ταραττεται καὶ ἰλιγγιᾷ, ὥπερ μεθύουσα ἅτε τοιούτων ἐφαπτομένη."

" and it (the soul) wanders and is confused and dizzy like a drunken man because it lays hold upon such things."<sup>1</sup>

When she relies on her native power of thinking and attends to objects which are strictly determinate and unchanging, she finds her way among them without uncertainty and confusion, and it is just this condition of the soul that we

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 79, C.



call "wisdom" or intelligence. (φρόνησις) This would indicate that the soul herself belongs more truly to the type with which she is most at home, the immutable, whereas the body certainly belongs to the mutable.

In the partnership of soul and body, it is the soul which is rightly master and the body servant. It is for the divine to command and rule, for the mortal to serve and obey. Hence it is the soul in us which plays the divine, the body which plays the mortal part.

The soul is relatively the permanent and divine thing in us, the body the merely human and mutable. We should expect therefore the body to be relatively perishable, the soul to be either wholly imperishable or nearly so. And yet we know that with favourable circumstances (ἐν τοιαύτῃ ὥρᾳ) even a dead body may be preserved from corruption for ages and there are parts of the body which seem all but indestructible. Much should we expect that a soul which has made itself as far as possible independent of the mutable body, and has escaped by death to the divine and invisible, will be lifted above mutability and corruption. But if a soul has all through life set its affections on bodily things and the gratifications of appetite, it may be expected to hanker after the body even when death has divorced them, and be dragged down into the cycle of births again





by this hankering. A man whose whole life has been an aspiration to rise above mutability to deiformity will be the last person to fear that the new and abiding deiform self which is being built up in him will be shattered by the event of death. Here the ideal of Socrates and the Christian ideal are fundamentally identical. The central thought in both cases is that man is born a creature of temporality and mutability into a temporal and mutable environment. But in virtue of the fact that there is a something "divine" in him, he cannot but aspire to a good which is above time and mutability and thus the right life is , from first to last, a process by which the merely secular and temporal self is re-made in the likeness of the eternal. The thought is that the real nature of the soul has to be learned from a consideration of the nature of the specific "good" to which it aspires. A creature whose well-being consists in living for an "eternal" good cannot be a mere thing of time and change.

## IX

The young men offer two objections to Socrates: one, that the soul is only the harmony resulting from the just proportion of the qualities of the body; the other, that though the soul be more durable than the body, yet it dies at last,



after having made use of several bodies; just as a man dies after he has worn several suits of clothes.

"Ἀνάγκη εἶναι τὸν μέλλοντα ἀποθανεῖσθαι δεδιέναι ὑπὲρ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ψυχῆς, μή ἐν τῇ νῦν τοῦ σώματος διεζεύξει παντάπασιν ἀπόλλυται."

"A man who is about to die must always fear that his soul will perish utterly in the impending dissolution of the body."<sup>1</sup>

Socrates, before he gives any answer, stops a little and deplores the misfortune of men, who by hearing the disputes of the ignorant that contradict everything, persuade themselves that there is no such thing as clear, solid, and sensible truths of reason; but that everything is uncertain. Like those who, being cheated by men, become men-haters; so they, being imposed upon by arguments, become haters of reason; that is, they take up an absolute hatred against all reason in general, and will not hear any argument. Socrates points out the injustice of this procedure. He shows that when two things are equally uncertain, wisdom directs us to choose that which is most advantageous and has the least danger. Now, beyond all dispute, such is the immortality of the soul, and therefore it ought to be embraced. For if this opinion prove true after our death are we not

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 88, B.



considerable gainers? and if it prove false, what do we lose?

Then he attacks that objection which represents the soul as a harmony, and refutes it by solid and convincing arguments, which at the same time prove the immortality of the soul. His arguments are these: Harmony always depends upon the parts conspiring together, and is never opposite to them; but the soul has no dependence upon the body, and always stands on the opposite side. Harmony admits of less and more, but the soul does not; from whence it would follow that all souls should be equal, that none of them are vicious and that the souls of beasts are equally good, and of the same nature with those of men, which is contrary to all reason.

"Ἄρμονία γὰρ δήπου παντελῶς αὐτότουτο οὔσα ἄρμονία ἀναρμωστίας οὔποτ' ἂν μετάσχοι."

"Because if a harmony is completely harmony, it could have no part in discord."<sup>1</sup>

In music, the body commands the harmony; but in nature, the soul commands the body. In music, the harmony can never give a sound contrary to the particular sounds of the parts that bend or unbend, or move; but in nature, the soul has

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 93, E.





a contrary sound to that of the body; it attacks all passions and desires; it checks, curbs, and punishes the body; so that it must need be a very different and opposite nature; which proves its spirituality and divinity. For nothing but what is spiritual and divine can be wholly opposite to what is material and earthly.

"Λέγω δὲ τὸ τοιόνδε οἶον καύματος ἐνόοντος καὶ δίψους ἐπὶ τούναντίον ὅμως ἔλκειν, τὸ μὴ πίνειν, καὶ πείνης ἐνούσης, ἐπὶ τὸ μὴ ἐσθίειν· καὶ ἄλλα μυρία που ὁρῶμεν ἐναντιουμένην τὴν ψυχὴν τοῖς κατὰ τὸ σῶμα."

" I mean this: when the body is hot and thirsty, the soul opposes it and draws it away from drinking, and from eating when it is hungry; and we see the soul opposing the body in countless other ways."<sup>1</sup>

The second objection runs thus: While the soul might outlive the body, that does not prove its immortality; since we know nothing to the contrary, but that it dies at last, after having animated a body several times.

In answer to this objection, Socrates says we must trace the cause of being and corruption of entities. If that be once agreed upon, we shall find no difficulty in determining

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 94, B.



what things are corruptible and what not. But what path shall we follow in the inquiry? Must it be that of physics? The conclusions of physics are so uncertain, that instead of being instructive, they only blind and mislead us. This Socrates makes out from his own experience, so that there is a necessity of going beyond this science, and having recourse to metaphysics, which alone can afford us the certain knowledge of the reasons and causes of beings, and of that which constitutes their essences. For effects may be discovered by their causes; but the causes can never be known by their effects. And upon this account we must have recourse to the divine knowledge, which Anaxagoras was so sensible of that he founded his treatise upon Physics upon this great principle, that *Νοῦς* is the cause of being.

"'Αλλ' ἀκούσας μὲν ποτε ἐκ βιβλίου τινός, ὡς ἔφη, 'Ἀναξαγόρου ἀναγινώσκοντος, καὶ λέγοντος, ὡς ἄρα νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ διακοσμῶν τε καὶ πάντων αἷτιος."

Then one day I heard a man reading from a book, as he said, by Anaxagoras, that it is the mind that arranges and causes all things."<sup>1</sup>

But instead of keeping to that principle, he fell in false upon that of second causes, and by that means deceived

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<sup>1</sup> *Phaedo*, 97, C.



the expectations of his hearers.

In order to make out the immortality of the soul, we must reconsider this order of Anaxagoras, and sound to the bottom the above-mentioned principle. If we do this we shall be satisfied that God placed every thing in the most fitting order. Now this best and most suitable state must be the object of our inquiry, to which purpose we must know wherein the particular good of every particular thing consists and what the general good of all things is. This discovery will reveal the immortality of the soul.

## X

For this purpose Socrates lifts his thoughts to immaterial qualities and eternal ideas; and therein finds his last proof of immortality.

In this proof we are offered a direct deduction of immortality from the fundamental postulate that the "forms" exist. This marks the argument, as intended, the climax of the whole reasoning, since their proof, if successful, must be recognized as complete by Cebes or any one else who regards the reality of the "forms" as the basis of his whole philosophy.

Life is a necessary concomitant of a soul, as illness is of fever, or heat of fire. A soul always brings life with it to any body in which it is present. Now there is an "op-





posite" to life, namely, death. Hence we may say that a soul will never allow itself to be overcome by the opposite of the character it always carries with itself. That is, life may be essentially predicated of the soul and therefore death can never be predicated of it. Thus the soul is, in the literal sense of the word, "undying" ( ἀθάνατος ); that is, the phrase " a dead soul" would be a c o n t r a d i c t i o a d j e c t o .

## XI

To this the friends of Socrates objected that the greatness of the subject, and man's natural infirmity, are the two sources of man's distrust and incredulity upon this subject. Whereupon Socrates endeavours to remove these two sources of doubt.

He attacks their distrust, by showing that the idea of the immortality of the soul harmonizes with the idea of God. For mortality, would learn virtue prejudicial to men of probity, and vice beneficial to the wicked, which cannot be imagined. So that there is a necessity for another life for rewarding the good and punishing the bad. And the soul, being immortal, carries along, with it into the other world its good and bad actions, its virtues and vices, which are the occasion of its eternal happiness or misery. Whence, by



a necessary consequence, we may gather what care we ought to take of the soul in this life.

## XII

When Socrates had made an end of his discourse, his friends asked what directions he would give concerning his affairs. The only direction I give, replied he, is to take care of yourselves, and to make yourselves as like to God as possible. Then they asked him how he would be interred? This question offended him. He would not have himself confounded with his corpse, which alone could be interred. Such false forms of expression, he said, gave dangerous wounds to the souls of men.

He then goes and bathes; his wife and children are brought to him; he talks to them a few moments, and then dismisses them. Upon his coming out of the bath, the cup is presented to him. He takes it, collects his thoughts, prays, and drinks it off with an admirable tranquillity of mind. Finding himself approaching his end, he gives them to know that he has resigned his soul into the hands of him who gave it, and the true physician who was coming to heal it. Such was the death of Socrates.

Plato closes his dialogue with the following words of Phaedo to Echeocrates:



" Ἦδε ἡ τελευτή, ὦ Ἐχέκρατες, τοῦ ἑταίρου ἡμῖν ἐγένετο  
 ἄνδρος, ὡς ἡμεῖς φαῖμεν ἄν, τῶν τότε ὧν ἐπειράθημεν ἀρίστου  
 καὶ ἄλλως φρονιμωτάτου καὶ δικαιοτάτου."

" Such was the death, Echecrates, of our friend; a man,  
 the very best of those of whom we had experience at that  
 time, and moreover the most sensible and just."

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## Chapter II

### Immortality in the New Testament.

#### I

Before we enter into the teaching of the New Testament about immortality a word may be said about the hope of immortality in the Old Testament. For the most part the writers of the Old Testament display towards the future of the individual beyond the grave a steady indifference; which is the more striking that it abounds in lavish and brilliant hopes for the earthly future of the nation. The references to a personal immortality in the presence of God are exceptional. In the historical Books they are limited to two heroes of the nation; in the prophets they do not occur; in the Psalms and the Book of Job they consist of a few cries of confidence that the believer in God can never be separated from Him. Otherwise, the life beyond the grave is pictured as a cheerless, subterranean reflection of the mere surface of human existence, but without God or hope; from the ultimate certainty of which the believer seeks a respite



by prayers for a long earthly life and the fulness of God's favour so long as this lasts.

Such is the impression which the Old Testament makes upon those who search it for a gospel of immortality.

## II

And now we proceed to the teaching of the New Testament. Here we have first to satisfy ourselves as to what Jesus own teaching on the subject was.

We must say from the beginning that Jesus knows nothing of arguments about immortality like those we found in Plato. He never attempts to philosophise. He passes by all theoretic questions regarding the soul's endless existence. He gives no proof of the certainty of a future existence; He presupposes that existence. He does not speak of immortality, but rather of life, as man's destiny. He dwells upon the broad truths, the foundations of hope, the certainties, which are contained in man's relation to God the Father, the new birth, the union with Himself. He communicates His doctrine of the Future neither in the way of reasoned statement nor as something which can be taken apart from other truths, but by unfolding the issues of that Divine kingdom the expectation of which had been the strength of the Old Testament hope.

In the Synoptical Gospels Christ's teaching moves for the



most part around the great idea of the kingdom of God. This is emphatically the case with all that he says on the problem of the last Things. His whole disclosure of the future has its central point in His doctrine of that kingdom and its consummation. This kingdom is presented in different aspects in the Gospels and throughout the New Testament. Christ Himself offers no definition of it. He deals with it as a thing familiar to those among whom He moved. In His parables He exhibits it in its ideal, while He illustrates also its nature, its laws, its history, and its goal. He frees it from the coarse material notions which had become connected with it. It had been secularised, externalised, and debased. It is a dominion or authority which is to be fully and effectually recognised. But it is also a realm or a society in which that recognition is to take place. It is an ideal, yet never to Him a mere ideal, but one that has a continuous realisation. This idea of a new order in which God should be sovereign was the central point in Christ's teaching. It was not a new idea but one taken over from the Old Testament.

"He took up the best ideals of Jewish prophecy and lifted them to even grander heights. He set aside the limitations of view in which the idea of the kingdom of God had been apprehended in Old Testament times, and gave that idea its true universality and spirituality. The kingdom of God





was for Him something larger, because more spiritual, than the Jewish state had ever been; something more spiritual, than any outward organization could ever be. Jesus' idea of the kingdom was rooted in the Old Testament, but it rose above the limited conceptions in which the Old Testament had presented the Messianic hope; much more did it rise above the popular ideals and stand in sharp contrast to them."<sup>1</sup>

The old idea thus became trasfigured; the current Jewish idea thus became an essentially new thing in His teaching. It is new cloth and must not be stretched onto the old garment of Judaism; it is new wine and must not be put into old wine-skins.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus taught that membership in the kingdom was dependent upon certain ethical and spiritual qualities. The kingdom is composed of those who possess a certain kind of character. It cannot, therefore, be an outward organization whose members are bound together by any such bonds as common ancestry, language, self-interest, or the occupancy of a common territory. If Matthew's version of the beatitudes is followed, they contain a forcible setting forth of the spiritual qualifications for membership in the kingdom. Humility, meekness, eager desire for righteousness, mercifulness, purity of heart,

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<sup>1</sup> Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Mk., 2: 21,22



and peacemaking are the conditions of participating in the kingdom and the characteristics of its members. But, if Luke's version is followed, the inward, spiritual nature of the kingdom is clearly implied. It cannot be supposed that Jesus teaches that the physically poor, wretched, and outcast, as such, compose his kingdom. He must mean (according to Luke) that the blessings of the kingdom are a reward for hardships and sufferings voluntarily endured. Participation in the kingdom, in either case, must be dependent upon inner conditions or qualities of life. Formally different as the beatitudes are in the two Gospels, both versions clearly imply the spiritual nature of the kingdom.

Another prominent idea of Jesus respecting the kingdom is that it is a growing reality. Its coming is a long historical process. Various aspects of this progress of the kingdom in the world are set forth in a group of parables which are designed to illustrate its nature. One of the most significant of these is preserved by Mark alone. It likens the growth of the kingdom to the slow and mysterious development of seed-grain when it is sown in the earth.<sup>1</sup> It pictures the husbandman as sowing the seed and then waiting while nature does her work. The natural processes are going forward. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself;

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<sup>1</sup> Mark, 4: 26-29. See also Mt., 13.



first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. So is the kingdom of God." It comes slowly, silently, mysteriously. Divine forces are operating to carry forward its development.

Again, the kingdom is universal in its design and scope. It is for all who fulfil the spiritual conditions of participating in its benefits. It knows no racial, social, or territorial limits. It is for all men who would enter it.<sup>1</sup>

This kingdom is a present thing, and that in a twofold sense. It is present, in so far as Christ brings it with Him, and embodies it in Himself. and it is present in so far as it has a true, though partial, realisation in those who attach themselves to Him, and in their lives give instance of the righteousness which makes the kingdom. The most explicit recognition of the kingdom as a present fact is found in such passages as "The kingdom of God is in you" (ἐντός ὑμῶν).<sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of God is come upon you." (ἐφ' ὑμᾶς).<sup>3</sup>

But it is also a thing of the future. When Jesus said, on one occasion, that some of those who heard him speak should not die till they saw the kingdom of God come with power,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Mat., 8:12, also Mt., 21: 43, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Lk., 17:21.

<sup>3</sup> Mt., 12: 28. See also Mt 11: 12. 21: 31. 23: 13 6: 33. 7:13.

<sup>4</sup> Mk., 9:1. See also Lk 13:29 Mk14:25. In this last passage he seems clearly to have had in mind the consummation of the





he doubtless referred to some future epoch at which the kingdom should advance to a new stage of its development. Both the present and the future aspect of the kingdom are recognized in the words." Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.<sup>1</sup>

This varied language of Jesus respecting the coming of this kingdom is best explained by supposing him to have taken a comprehensive view of its nature and progress. He conceived of the kingdom as already present, but in its fuller development and in its final perfection it was still future. This large, free use of the term, according to which now one, now another, aspect of the kingdom is dwelt upon, renders it impossible to define the kingdom adequately in any single formula. It is difficult to define, not because it means nothing in particular, but because it means so much.

### III.

We pass on now to examine the teaching of Jesus concerning his parousia. We shall consider five passages of special importance, taking them in order.

Following the specific instructions given to the Twelve when Jesus sent them out,<sup>2</sup> we find in Matthew 10: 16-42 an

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kingdom in heaven

<sup>1</sup> Mk., 10: 15.

<sup>2</sup> Mk., 6: 7-11. Mt. 10: 1-15. Lk., 9: 1-5.



extended discourse of a more general character. In the midst of that discourse occurs this saying: " Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."<sup>1</sup> There is no parallel to this passage in Mark and in Luke. But a considerable part of the matter which immediately precedes the passage just cited is found in Mark 13:9-13 and Luke 12:11,12; 21:12-17; in other words, this paragraph which in Matthew 10:16-23 ends with the verse in question is found almost entire in Jesus' eschatological discourse as given in Mk. 13 and Luk. 21. These facts alone render it impossible to suppose that Jesus really predicted his second coming before the Twelve had finished their mission. This whole discourse Mt. 10: 16-42 is demonstrably a collection of materials derived from various sources, and belonging in various connections, and verse 23, which speaks of the coming of the Son of man, is, in all probability, a reminiscence of the prediction of the parousia in the great eschatological discourse of Mk. 13, Lk. 21 and Mt. 24, and therefore requires no separate consideration."<sup>2</sup>

The second passage to be noticed is found in all the synoptics in the same connection, but in slightly varying form.

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<sup>1</sup> Mt., 10:23

<sup>2</sup> Stevens: The Theology of the New Testament, p.150.



In Mark the passage reads: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power."<sup>1</sup> Corresponding to the closing words we have in Luke: "till they see the kingdom of God"<sup>2</sup>, and in Matthew: "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."<sup>3</sup> The first Evangelist must have understood the words to refer to the parousia. The language of Mark and Luke is general enough to apply to any crisis in the realization of the kingdom. Stevens in his above mentioned book "The Theology of the New Testament" writes as follows about these passages: "Considered from the standpoint of exegesis alone, I should say that the words in the form in which they appear in our sources may naturally refer to the parousia; this is especially clear in the case of Matthew. But, considered from the standpoint of criticism and from that of intrinsic probability, the case is quite different. Why should Jesus declare so definitely the time of his second coming in that particular connection? Apart from the difficulty raised by the fact that he elsewhere disclaimed knowing the time of that event (Mk.13:32), there is no par-

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<sup>1</sup> Mk., 9:1

<sup>2</sup> Luke, 9:27

<sup>3</sup> Mat., 16:28





ticular motive for such a prediction here. It is certainly unwarranted to say that Jesus explicitly predicted an event connected with the consummation of his kingdom which did not happen, unless the critical and exegetical grounds for so doing are compelling. In this case, at least, they are not so. The language of Mark and Luke is more naturally explained as referring to some special crisis in his work or to the general triumph of his kingdom; and this view has the advantage when our passage is considered in its relation to the discourse as a whole.....My conclusion is that this passage did not refer originally to our Lord's visible return to earth."<sup>1</sup>

The third passage to be considered is the great eschatological discourse, Mk.13; Mt.24; Lk.21. It is quite clear that according to Mark nothing is said about the parousia in the first part of this discourse. That is a separate event which is to follow the destruction of the temple, but within a comparatively short time. Luke closely follows Mark, but Matthew has a number of distinctive features. He represents the disciples as asking not only about the time of the temple's overthrow, but about "the sign of his coming and of the end of the age."<sup>2</sup> as if these were either one event or inseparably connected. The idea that one and the same event, namely, "the

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<sup>1</sup> The Theology of the New Testament, p.151f.

<sup>2</sup> Mat., 24:3.



end" (v. 14) is referred to in the discourse dominates Matthew's version through. Throughout this section (vv. 15-28), in which the "abomination of desolation" and its attendant evils are described, it is everywhere assumed that it is the sign of Messiah's coming, and not, as in Mark and Luke, the sign of the temple's overthrow. In keeping with this representation the coming of Christ is described as following immediately after the appearance of the Roman ensigns. It is evident that there are difficulties in this discourse. This version of the discourse tells us that Jesus said he would personally and visibly return to earth in immediate connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, but that before this event his Gospel should be preached throughout the whole world; but despite this precise prediction as to the time of his coming, that "no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but only the Father", knew the exact time; that he added, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." This construction of the discourse involves Jesus in a tissue of contradictions which we must not attribute to him without the most compelling reasons. We are therefore justified in using the first Gospel only as a secondary source of Jesus' teaching on this subject.

The fourth passage to be considered occurs in connection



with the trial of Jesus and appears in all the Synoptics:

"And ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."<sup>1</sup> "Hence-

forth (ἀπ' ἄρτι) ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."<sup>2</sup>

"But from henceforth (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν) shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God."<sup>3</sup> This statement is made in answer to the high priest's question.

"Art thou the Christ?" Jesus replies that he is, and in language resembling that of Dan. 7:13, asserts the speedy triumph of his cause. From this very time, he says, \_ from this moment of apparent defeat, \_ you will see the tokens of the triumph of my kingdom. How are we to understand this passage? It appears impossible to refer this passage to a future advent. We may entertain two suppositions: either that Jesus spoke symbolically of his coming on the clouds, meaning his glorious triumph over all hostile powers, or that tradition has cast his actual thought into form because it was supposed that he spoke on this occasion of his second advent. It is possible to hold both that

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<sup>1</sup> Mk., 14:62

<sup>2</sup> Mt., 26:64

<sup>3</sup> Luk., 22:69





Jesus actually used the words in question, referring to the triumph of his kingdom, and that the early disciples referred them to his parousia."The one thing that is clear is, that they did not actually refer to the parousia, whatever their original form."<sup>1</sup> The conclusion to which we come is that Jesus sometimes spoke of the coming of his kingdom, or of his coming in his kingdom, when he referred to the progress or triumph of his cause, and that there was a strong tendency in the minds of the early disciples to apply all such language to his visible return in glory to earth to consummate his kingdom.

The last passage is Luke 17:20-18:8.

It is difficult to suppose that this collection of sayings originally referred to a visible coming of Christ to consummate his kingdom at the end of the world, for the following reasons.1) The opening verses (20,21) express quite a different, that is, a spiritual, idea of the kingdom and of its coming;2) considerable parts of this matter (v.v.23,24,26,27,34-37) are found in substance in Matthew's version of the eschatological discourse (24:26,27,37,39, 40,41,48) and we have seen that this discourse is evidently made up of diverse elements which are dominated and blen-

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<sup>1</sup> Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, p.158.



ded by the current expectation of the Lord's visible return to earth in close connection with the overthrow of the Jewish state; 3) The parable of the Unjust Judge (18:1-8), is allegorized by Luke and applied to teach watchfulness in view of the Lord's second coming. We therefore see in this discourse traces of the tendency to apply to the idea of a final parousia sayings and parables whose form and content do not naturally yield themselves to such an application. So I regard it as improbable that the parable of the Pounds<sup>1</sup> or Talents<sup>2</sup> originally referred to the parousia. It seems to have been applied allegorically to this subject because the parable-story contains the idea of a lord returning to his servants. This idea of the "coming" is incidental; it is not the point of the parable.

The conclusion to which the reader of these passages comes is that all three synoptists have applied to a final coming sayings of Jesus which could not have been originally intended to refer to that event.

To the same conclusion we come as to the teaching of Jesus about judgment. We encounter a difficulty analogous to that which we found when studying the parousia. The

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<sup>1</sup> Luke, 19:11-27

<sup>2</sup> Mt., 25:14-29



divine judgment, is presented now as a process, and now as a final crisis. We find reasons for suspecting that the eschatological conception of this subject was so dominant in the minds of the first disciples that some sayings which seem more naturally to express the principle of judgment are treated as if they referred to the "day of judgment" at the end of the present world-period.

In the passage: "Every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment"<sup>1</sup>, the reference is probably to the local court, which here stands as a symbol of temporal divine judgment. The passage beginning: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord"<sup>2</sup>, is referred to the day of judgment by Matthew. The first evangelist shows the same tendency to connect all references to the principle of judgment with a final "day" as he does to refer all Christ's "comings" to a crisis at the end of the age. In reporting the discourse upon the responsibility of men for their words and deeds (12:33ff.) he adds that for every idle word they shall give account in the day of judgment, and that by their words they shall be justified or condemned (12:36.37) Luke reports the same sayings (6:43-45),

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<sup>1</sup> Mt., 5:22.

<sup>2</sup> Mt., 7:21-23.





but, without, this eschatological application.

Matthew has appended to the parousia-discourse, which we have been considering a judgment-programme, in which all the nations are represented as appearing before the Son of man, who separates them into two classes and pronounces their doom.<sup>1</sup> since this passage is peculiar to Matthew, and in view of his handling of eschatological materials, it is difficult to determine the probable import of this highly pictorial description. The conclusion respecting the doctrine of judgment must be similar to that which we reached in regard to that of the parousia. A principle or process of judgment is recognized, but this process is conceived of as culminating in a crisis at the end of the present world-period. This view is strongly confirmed by the representations of the fourth Gospel. But a candid criticism must admit that it is almost as difficult to be sure of the exact words of Jesus respecting the "day of judgment," as it is to determine what he said concerning his second advent.

Jesus assured his disciples of a resurrection and of a blessed life in heaven. They shall be, he said, "as angels in heaven";<sup>2</sup> accounted worthy to attain to that world, and

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<sup>1</sup> Mt., 25: 31-36

<sup>2</sup> Mk., 12: 25.



the resurrection from the dead being "sons of God, sons of the resurrection".<sup>1</sup> Their good deeds shall be "recompensed in the resurrection of the just."<sup>2</sup> From these passages many scholars infer that unbelievers are not to share, in any sense, in a resurrection; but this is a precarious <sup>3</sup> *a r g u m e n t u m e s i l e n t i o*. Jesus did not think of Hades as a realm of unconsciousness, but of activity, and therefore had no special motive to touch upon the question, discussed by the Jews, whether all, or only some, should be awakened from the sleep of death. Moreover, when he speaks of the resurrection of the pious, he lays no special emphasis upon the corporeal aspect of it, but conceives of it as the perfecting of the life in all that concerns its divine destiny.<sup>4</sup> That a resurrection in the sense is promised to the righteous only, does not in the least prove that others continue without bodily form, or that they abide in an unconscious existence, or cease to be.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lk., 20: 35, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Lk., 14: 14.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Mk 12: 26. John, 5: 29. Acts, 24: 15.

<sup>4</sup> Mt., 12: 24-27

<sup>5</sup> See Salmond, Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 336ff.



## IV

From Christ's own teaching about immortality, we proceed naturally to those of His apostles. The Pauline doctrine, requires separate treatment. Its magnitude and its comparative completeness make that necessary.

The Epistle of James comes first to our hand, as the work of the head of the mother-church of Jerusalem. This Epistle is addressed to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion.<sup>1</sup> It is evident from the author's language that his readers were composed of the poorer and humbler classes,<sup>2</sup> who were, most of them, in the employ of their richer fellow-countrymen. They were subject to oppression and injustice at the hands of their nonchristian employers.<sup>3</sup> The writer echoes the thought of Jesus,<sup>4</sup> that the poor are more receptive of his truth than the rich. He insists upon the perishableness of riches,<sup>5</sup> but assumes that the rich man may live the life of humility and love.<sup>6</sup>

But the Epistle is comparatively silent on the whole

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<sup>1</sup> 1:1

<sup>2</sup> 2:5.

<sup>3</sup> 2:6. 5:4.

<sup>4</sup> Lk., 6: 20. 7: 22. 14: 21.

<sup>5</sup> 1: 10, 11

<sup>6</sup> 1: 10.





subject of immortality. It has but a few allusions to the last things. It moves within the circle of simple Christian duty. It finds the truth of worship in practical charity and personal unworldliness.<sup>1</sup> It regards the grace of the gospel as a salvation, or a life which, by the will of God, becomes ours by regeneration through the word of truth.<sup>2</sup> It does not limit its view of that grace, however, entirely to the present. It looks to a future for the life which comes by the new birth. It points to a crown of life which shall be the reward of temptation endured and to a kingdom promised by God to them that love Him, of which the poor of this world, rich in faith are the heirs.<sup>3</sup> It speaks of γέεννα.<sup>4</sup> It has repeated references to the Divine judgment, the equivalence of its awards, their certainty and their nearness. There is a Judge who already "standeth before the doors".<sup>5</sup> His judgment will be without mercy to the merciless but to the merciful it will be tempered with mercy.<sup>6</sup> That judgment will be heavier where there is larger

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<sup>1</sup> 1:27

<sup>2</sup> 1:18

<sup>3</sup> 1:12

<sup>4</sup> 3:6

<sup>5</sup> 5:9

<sup>6</sup> 2:13



responsibility.<sup>1</sup> The closing words of the Epistle point to the penalty of sin.<sup>2</sup> With the apostolic Church in general our author believes that he is living "in the last days."<sup>3</sup> He states definitely the "coming of the Lord." The Parousia of Christ is represented as "nigh at hand." All judgment is associated with it. The expectation of it is the motive for patience, and the argument against all murmuring.<sup>4</sup>

## V

In no section of the New Testament do we find so many exceptional phenomena crowded into narrow space as in the Epistle of Jude. Since there is an obvious interdependence between the Epistle of Jude and Second Peter, it will be convenient to treat them together. One of the most peculiar things in these writings is the place which they give to the judgment of angels. This is a prominent subject

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1 3:3                      3 5:3                      4 5:8

<sup>2</sup> The sentence σώσει ψυχὴν ἐκ θανάτου (shall save a soul from death) is difficult one. What is the meaning of θανάτου here? If the θάνατος has the meaning which the same word has in 1:15, than the sentence saving from death is not identified with the conversion, but is regarded as the



in the Apocalyptic literature. It appears, for example, in the Book of Jubilees<sup>1</sup>, and in the Apocalypse of Baruch,<sup>2</sup> where the fallen angels are described as "tormented in chains." But it is treated at greatest length in the Book of Enoch. There the fall of the angels, the destruction ordained for them by God, and the purgation of the earth are described.<sup>3</sup>

The New Testament has nothing comparable to those amorphous inventions of the apocalyptic imagination. With the exception of the corresponding statement in Second Peter, this is the only passage in the New Testament in which fallen angels are described as at present in bonds.<sup>4</sup>

Both books look to the return of Christ as the decisive event of the future at once for the righteous and for the unrighteous among men. They speak of "the promise of His

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issue of that. It is the deprivation of all that makes the reality and joy of life, here and hereafter.

<sup>1</sup> 5.

<sup>2</sup> 56:10-13

<sup>3</sup> 6-10

<sup>4</sup> In Mat., 25:41 is mentioned a fate prepared for the devil and his angels. But that passage also belongs to the apocalyptic literature.





coming", of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," of "the presence of His glory," as the hope of the former.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, they proclaim the future recompense of the good, describing it as "eternal life" and as eternal kingdom"<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, they declare with large insistence the certainty and finality of the doom of the evil, pointing to Sodom and Gomorrah "as examples of suffering the punishment of eternal fire."

## VI

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have a form of doctrine in affinity with Paul's as also with much that is found in Luke's Gospel and in the Book of Acts, but in still closer affinity with the older Apostolic type of teaching. Ideas and phraseology which are familiar to us in the Pauline writings appear again in this great Epistle, but with other shades of meaning. Old Testament doctrine is the basis of its teaching, but that doctrine has now a new and more developed form. Addressed to a body of Jewish Christians of the second generation, who belonged perhaps to some section of the Eastern Dispersion, and whose

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<sup>1</sup> Jude24; 2Pet. 1:16;2:4

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,21; 2Pet.1:11



conversion had taken place many years before, this remarkable Epistle tries to induce the readers to remain steadfast in their adherence to Christ. The burden of all the author's arguments and appeals is: Do not apostatize.

The majesty of that which they have, rather than the glory of that which they look for, is the subject of the Epistle. A contrast is drawn between two aeons or dispensations, and Christ is the Heir and Head of the "world to come."<sup>1</sup> A "rest" is provided for the people of God; ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμός τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ.<sup>2</sup> But neither the "world to come" nor the "rest" is presented distinctively as of the future. The doctrine of "resurrection of the dead" is once mentioned, and it appears to be the doctrine of a general resurrection. The doctrine of "eternal judgment" is also introduced. The thought of "the day drawing nigh" is given as a reason for provoking one another to love and good works, an incentive to study fellowship and mutual edification.<sup>3</sup> But the Judge is God Himself, not the Son. When Christ appears the second time it is to "them that wait for Him", and His object then is "salvation"<sup>4</sup>. But But God is "the Judge of all" to whom all come.

<sup>1</sup> 2:5; 6:6

<sup>2</sup> 4:1-9

<sup>4</sup> 9:28

<sup>3</sup> 10:24,25.



In connection also with the great idea of a covenant, a large doctrine of recompence is proclaimed. The penalty of the unrighteous is described as "judgment" "fierceness of fire", "perdition."<sup>1</sup> The eye of believers is directed to a heaven which is made real to them as the place into which their High Priest and forerunner has passed.<sup>2</sup> The hope of the righteous is "that which is within the veil"<sup>3</sup>. It is an "eternal inheritance", "an enduring substance", "the promise", a "better country," a "city prepared" of God, a "kingdom which cannot be moved", which also is received in a measure now.<sup>4</sup>

## VII

We come now to examine the teaching of one who, though neither belonging to the original Twelve, nor a child of Galilee, had a special apostleship, the wide apostleship of the Gentile world, and has left us a larger number of writings than any of the immediate companions of our Lord. The deep and far-reaching influence of Paul of Tarsus upon Christian truth and the history of the Christian Church is recognised by all.

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<sup>1</sup> 10: 27, 39

<sup>2</sup> 4: 4; 6: 20

<sup>3</sup> 7 6: 19

<sup>4</sup> 9: 15. 10: 34. 36; 11: 18. 12: 28.





Here we have a man who is different from the other New Testament writers in intellectual make-up, mental training, and religious experience and it is reasonable to expect from him a very distinct type of doctrine. In his natural genius, his dialectic faculty, and his peculiar education there is much to suggest that in his case we shall have a more definite and reasoned presentation of Christian truth. The materials which are at our disposal in investigating his teaching about the future life are considerable. Two prominent themes of Paul's eschatology are:

- 1) The Lord's second coming
- 2) The Resurrection

To the Lord's parousia the apostle, with the whole Apostolic Church, looked forward as the great day of deliverance and triumph, when Christ should destroy his enemies by the brightness of his coming.<sup>1</sup> He dwelt upon the resurrection in order to remove the difficulties and objections which were felt by the Greek mind with regard to it, and to assure the Corinthian believers that there would be provided, even in the spiritual world, a suitable embodiment for the spirit.<sup>2</sup>

There can be no reasonable doubt that the apostle expected

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. 2:8

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:12ff.



the personal, visible return of Christ to occur in the near future. In the First Thessalonians he expresses himself in such a way as to show that he hoped to be living at the parousia. In his preaching Paul had emphasized the hope of Christ's speedy coming.<sup>1</sup> When some of the members of the Church died, the question naturally arose: How would those who had died stand related to the Lord's advent? would not they be at some disadvantage as compared with the living, who would be ready and waiting to enter at once into the joys and rewards of the Messianic kingdom? To this difficulty Paul addresses himself in First Thessalonians 4:13-18. He assures his readers, that those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will be at no disadvantage. The certainty of resurrection is the guaranty of their full and immediate participation in the Messianic blessedness at the parousia. At the Lord's coming "the dead in Christ" shall at once arise so as to be ready to join the living in being caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, hence to be ever with the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Paul regards those members of the Church who had died as forming in this scene a minority as compared with those who should be living, among whom he

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess., 5:2

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4:17



himself expected to be. Twice he uses the expression. "Ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες", <sup>1</sup> in contrast to those who shall have died before the Lord returns. The wellknown fact to which the whole New Testament testifies, that the apostolic Church regarded the parousia as near at hand, confirms this natural interpretation of the passage in question.

Did the apostle abandon this expectation in later years? It is certainly less prominent in the later epistles. The Corinthians are urged to await the Lord's coming. <sup>2</sup> In his later letters also he refers to the manifestation of Christ in glory <sup>3</sup>, and his watchword still is: "The Lord is at hand" (Ὁ Κύριος ἐγγύς) <sup>4</sup>. But when he was in prison he faced the prospect of speedy martyrdom. He is not expecting the Lord; rather he is going to Him. Such are the facts. The natural inference to be drawn from the facts is that, as time went on, the parousia ceased to be central in Paul's thought.

Paul's view of death differs very much from the Jewish view of death. To the mind of the Jew death was the greatest of misfortunes. It was departure to Sheol, a gloomy realm of shadows and forgetfulness. It was the forfeiture of life,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess., 4:15, 17

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinth., 1:7, 8

<sup>3</sup> Col., 3:4

<sup>4</sup> 1 Phil., 4:5.





the loss of life's fulness and richness, abandonment to a vague and purposeless existence, a state of deprivation and incompleteness. For Paul the Christian all this was changed. Death was departure to be with Christ, which is better than continued life on earth;<sup>1</sup> it is the portal to a full and happy existence in which the believer is "at home with the Lord".<sup>2</sup> Death is not to be feared, but to be welcomed, because it is the gate to eternal fulness of life. Death, as the Jew knew and dreaded it, exists for the Christian no more. As involving the dissolution of man's earthly body, death remains; but for the Christian its power is broken, its sting is taken away.<sup>3</sup> The believer knows that death shall not have dominion over him; that life shall subdue the "last enemy"<sup>4</sup>, and that death shall be "swallowed up in victory"<sup>5</sup>. Hence Paul is fond of describing death, by a euphemism, as a sleep in Jesus.<sup>6</sup> The term expresses the blessed rest in fellowship with Christ into which the believer enters at death. Death is robbed of its terrors and is seen as the entrance into the fulness of peace, joy, and blessedness.

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<sup>1</sup> Phil., 1:23;

<sup>2</sup> 2Cor., 5:6-8

<sup>3</sup> 1Cor., 15:56

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 15:26

<sup>5</sup> 1Cor., 15:54;

<sup>6</sup> 1Thes., 4:14; 1Cor., 7:39;

15:6.18.20:



Let us turn now to Plato and see what similarities there are between Plato and Paul. As we saw in our study of Plato, especially in the *Phaedo*, the temporary union of a particular soul with a particular body is held to constitute life, while death is :

λύσις καὶ χωρισμός ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος.

" Death is the separation of the soul from the body."<sup>1</sup>

Plato defines Philosophy as a "rehearsal of death".

The lover of wisdom, he writes, tries to "separate" as far as possible his soul from communion with the body<sup>2</sup> by holding aloof from corporeal pleasures and from the distracting and delusive representations of the senses; whence it may truly be said that he dies every day he lives.

The Platonic μελέτη θανάτου is no mere theoretical dogma, but a practical rule of conduct. Like the Apostle Paul we are to "die daily" - die, that is to the body with its affections and lusts. Paul appears to represent the body as virtually a kind of prison. He calls it "the earthly house of our tabernacle" in which "we groan, being burdened" (στενάζομεν βαρούμενοι)<sup>3</sup>. The Platonic meditation on death is also strikingly parallel to many exhorta-

<sup>1</sup> *Phaed.*, 67 D.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 64 E.

<sup>3</sup> *2Cor.*, 5:1-4



tions of St. Paul. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth": νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.<sup>1</sup>  
 " I buffet my body and bring it into bondage."<sup>2</sup> "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body (τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε), ye shall live."<sup>3</sup>

It will scarcely be denied that, in point of doctrine as well as phraseology, these passages naturally recall to us the teaching of the Phaedo. But there are also points of difference. The Pauline conception of νέκρωσις involves a new and distinctive element, which at once differentiates Religion from Philosophy.

Matthew Arnold expressed the sum and substance of this new element as follows. "to die with Christ to the law of the flesh, to live with Christ to the law of the mind."<sup>4</sup> The same writer has remarked that in St. Paul the words "life" and "death" often mean something different from "the ordinary physical life and death." Death, for him, is

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<sup>1</sup> Col., 3:5.

<sup>3</sup> Rom., 8:12.13.

<sup>2</sup> 1Cor., 9:27

<sup>4</sup> St. Paul and Protestantism, p. 51 (ed. 1889), quoted by J. Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece, p. 386., ed. 1908.





living after the flesh, obedience to sin; life is mortifying by the spirit the deeds of the flesh, obedience to righteousness.

It is in connection with this conception of death as the entrance into fulness of life that Paul develops his doctrine of resurrection. The immediate occasion of his defending this doctrine at so great length was the denial of it by some<sup>1</sup> who were possessed of the idea that the soul, as a spiritual entity, was sufficient unto itself and required no embodiment.<sup>2</sup> The apostle's argument proceeds on the assumption that in passing from this world into a higher sphere man's personality is not to be dismembered; that his corporeal life, like his spiritual life, is to be continuous and unbroken. The primary ground of this conviction lies in Paul's mysticism. It is union with Christ which, to his mind, guarantees this continuity of life. Christ's resurrection is the pledge that God will bring from the dead those who are fallen asleep in him.<sup>3</sup> Paul starts from the fact that Christ rose from the dead. That being true, the possibility of resurrection cannot be sweepingly denied.<sup>4</sup> Now Christ's resurrection carries with

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor., 15:12

<sup>2</sup> Ibit., 15:35.

<sup>3</sup> 1Thess., 4:14; 1Cor., 15:12-19

<sup>4</sup> 1Cor., 15:12



it the resurrection of those who are united to him.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, our salvation would be only an imperfect affair if it related only to this life.<sup>2</sup> If the idea of resurrection is to be summarily ruled out of Christian belief and hope, then the apostle's doctrine of salvation would rest upon an error of fact, since the assertion that Christ rose from the dead was central in it.<sup>3</sup> and, equally, upon a delusive hope for the future since, in that case, we should be without the guaranty of triumph over death.<sup>4</sup> But when we know that Christ, the spiritual head of humanity, has risen from the dead, all is changed. Faith and hope have strong foundations<sup>5</sup> and sufferings for the cause of Christ are amply justified.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to notice the affinities of this conception of Paul with that of Plato. Among the topics on which Plato frequently dwells is that of the relation between the Universal and the particular. How the Infinite comes into contact with the finite, (in Paul's language the union with Christ), is one of the important themes of Plato. It will be pertinent here to recall part of the

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor., 15:20:

<sup>2</sup> Ibit., 15:19

<sup>3</sup> Ibit., 15:15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibit., 15:16-18

<sup>5</sup> 1Cor., 15:21ff.

<sup>6</sup> Ibit., 15:31.32



famous passage of the *Phaedo* in which Socrates tells the story of his intellectual development. After describing how he had found no rest or satisfaction for his mind in the study of mere secondary causes, he proceeds as follows.

Ἔρχομαι γὰρ δὴ ἐπιχειρῶν σοι ἐπιδείξασθαι τῆς αἰτίας τὸ εἶδος ὃ πεπραγμάτευμαι, καὶ εἶμι πάλιν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνα τὰ πολυθρύλητα καὶ ἄρχομαι ἀπ' ἐκείνων, ὑποθέμενος εἶναι τι καλὸν καθ' αὐτό καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ μέγα καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα ἃ εἴ μοι δίδως τε καὶ συγχωρεῖς εἶναι ταῦτα, ἐλπίζω σοι ἐκ τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπιδείξειν καὶ ἀνευρήσειν, ὥς ἀθάνατον ἢ ψυχὴν.....φαίνεται γὰρ μοι, εἴ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτό τὸ καλόν, οὐδέ δι' ἕν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ.....ἐάν τις μοι λέγῃ, δι' ὅτι καλὸν ἐστὶν ὀτιοῦν, ἢ χρῶμα εὐανθές ἔχον ἢ σχῆμα ἢ ἄλλο ὀτιοῦν τῶν τοιούτων, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα χαίρειν ἐγώ, ταραττομαι γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι, τοῦτο δὲ ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀτέχνως καὶ ἴσως εὐήθως ἔχω παρ' ἑμαυτῷ, ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλο τι ποιεῖ αὐτό καλόν ἢ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ εἴτε παρουσία εἴτε κοινωνία εἴτε ὅπη δὴ καὶ ὅπως προσγενομένη. οὐ γὰρ ἔτι τοῦτο διισχυρίζομαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι τῷ καλῷ πάντα τὰ καλὰ γίγνεται καλά.

"I come now to show you the sort of cause that interests





me. I will return to the old and well-worn story, and begin with the Ideas, postulating a self-existent Beautiful, Good, Great, and so on. If you grant me those, I hope to make you understand what I mean by causation..... I hold that if a thing is beautiful, it is so for no other reason than because it partakes of the Ideal Beauty.....If any one tells me that such and such a thing is beautiful, because it has the bloom of colour, or form, or anything else of the sort, I neglect all that; it merely confuses me; and to this one point, simply and artlessly - perhaps you will think foolishly - I cleave fast in my own mind, that nothing makes an object beautiful except the presence of Ideal Beauty, - their communion with each other, or the advent of the Idea, in whatsoever way; for upon the mode of the connection I do not insist; but only that it is the Idea of Beauty by which beautiful things are made beautiful."<sup>1</sup>

Communion (κοινωνία), participation (μετέχειν, μέθεξις, μεταλαμβάνειν, μετάληψις), presence (παροισία) - these, are the usual terms employed by Plato to shadow forth the relation between the eternal self-existent Idea and the particulars of which, whatever may be the exact character of the relationship, Plato is profoundly convinced that the

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 100, B-D.



Idea and nothing else is the cause. Now of the particular communications with, or partaking, of the Idea, we find no trace in the dialogues of Plato. Plato confines himself exclusively to this, that the Idea is "present" in or "possesses" (κατέχει)<sup>1</sup> the particular. It is worthy of notice that Plato attributed also the phenomenon of inspiration to παρουσία, or presence of the inspiring God. He who is inspired is ἑνθεός. There is a God within him, or he is possessed by a God. (κατοκωχή).

One can see the affinities between the two thinkers, but also the superiority of Paul who emphasise not only the union of Christ with man but also the union of man with Christ. "πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με."

"I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me".<sup>2</sup>  
 "Ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε."  
 "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."<sup>3</sup>

"ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καὶ...."

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and....."<sup>4</sup>

"Ζῇ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός." "Christ liveth in me."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, 104<sup>c</sup>, D.

<sup>4</sup> Rom., 13:14

<sup>2</sup> Philip., 4:13

<sup>5</sup> Gal., 2:20

<sup>3</sup> Gal., 3:27



Christ the Living, exalted with the Father, but by God's grace as Spirit in Paul and Paul in Him - that is the Apostle Paul's assurance of Christ and experience of Christ. To him the person of Christ occupies the same relative position as is occupied by the Idea of Righteousness in Plato. It is more than a merely verbal or superficial analogy when the relationship between the believer's soul and Christ is described in the New Testament by the formula of participation or communion. "Partakers of the divine nature."<sup>1</sup> (Θείας κοινωνοί φύσεως.), "the fellowship (κοινωνία) of Jesus Christ our Lord,"<sup>2</sup> "our fellowship (κοινωνία) is with the Father and with His Son,"<sup>3</sup> "fellow-partakers (συμμέτοχοι) of the promise in Christ Jesus,"<sup>4</sup> "partakers of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>5</sup> "partakers (μέτοχοι) of the heavenly calling"<sup>6</sup>. And if the idea of κοινωνία or fellowship is common to both, that of "immanence" is even more so. No doubt the word παρουσία, "presence", by which Plato generally expresses the relationship, has a different meaning in the New Testament, where it refers, with few exceptions, to the second coming of our Lord and the

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<sup>1</sup> 2Peter, 1:4

<sup>2</sup> 1Cor., 1:9

<sup>3</sup> 1John, 1:3

<sup>4</sup> Eph., 3:6

<sup>5</sup> Hebr., 6:4

<sup>6</sup> 8bid., 3:1





fulfilment of the reign of righteousness already begun upon the earth. Parousia, in Plato, means partial, incomplete attainment; in Christianity, it signifies the final consummation. That is the obvious difference, so far as language is concerned; but it is not a mere question of words: the point is rather that the doctrine of the Parousia, as the presence of the Infinite, in the finite, underlies the deepest religious teaching of St. Paul's Epistles, as well as the Gospel and Epistles of John, having attained, of course, to new vitality and power by the embodiment of the divine Idea in a divine yet human personality. "The Word (Λόγος) became flesh and dwelt among us."<sup>1</sup> Plato professes himself unable to conceive of any cause except the immanent Idea; it is the Idea of Righteousness, present in the soul, and nothing else whatever, that makes us righteous. In the same way, according to the New Testament, the indwelling Christ, "Christ in you," produces the Christian or Christ-like character. Other cause there is and can be none." "I am the bread of life"..... "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him."<sup>2</sup> "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John, 1:14

<sup>2</sup> Ibit., 6:48.56.

<sup>3</sup> Ibit., 14:20.



" Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the World."<sup>1</sup>

" Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord."<sup>2</sup> "Christ in you, the hope of glory."<sup>3</sup> " It is God which worketh in you both

to will and to work, for His good pleasure."<sup>4</sup> " No longer I, but Christ liveth in me."<sup>5</sup> " My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you."<sup>6</sup> Nor

does the living and life-giving principle which the Apostles identifies with Christ reside merely in the soul of the be-

liever. As in Plato the universe of Ideas constitutes the immanent reality of the world, so in the Fourth Gospel and

in St. Paul, Christ is the inherent life and truth of all that is, a cosmic power as well as an influence that works

in human lives. The author of the Fourth gospel apparently intended to suggest this great idea when he wrote, "That

which hath been made was life in him" (ὃ γέγονεν, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν).<sup>7</sup> The entire universe, organic and inorganic, lives

in Christ." "In him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible...

and in Him all things consist." (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1John, 4:4

<sup>4</sup> Phil., 2:13

<sup>2</sup> 1Peter, 3:15

<sup>5</sup> Gal., 2:20

<sup>3</sup> Col., 1:27

<sup>6</sup> Ibit., 4:19

<sup>7</sup> Oxyrinchus Papyri: 3 ; "Jesus saith. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me."

<sup>8</sup> Col., 1:16



Now such a union with Christ, according to Paul, guarantees this continuity of life, Christ's resurrection being the pledge that God will bring from the dead those who are fallen asleep in him. But now comes the question, "How can it be conceived as happening? With what sort of a body is the subject of resurrection clothed?"<sup>1</sup> The Apostle declares the objection that this question raises insuperable difficulties superficial, and appeals to analogies to show that transformations from one form of being to another, and the variety of bodies which we observe in nature, suggest the reasonableness of an appropriate embodiment for the spirit in the heavenly world. His first illustration is drawn from seed-grain. The kernel which is buried in the earth is transformed by nature into a new product; to the life which the seed enfolds God gives a new form or body through the mysterious operation of natural law.<sup>2</sup> This analogy is adapted to suggest both the possible organic connection between the present and the future body and, also, the superiority of the latter. He next appeals to the variety of embodiments which God provides for different creatures - men, beasts, fishes - which

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor., 15:35.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 15:36-38





are, in each case, adapted to the environment and needs of the several orders of being.<sup>1</sup> "All flesh is not the same flesh." Again: If we contemplate the heavenly bodies, we behold great variety in magnitude and beauty. Here we observe higher and lower, more and less glorious<sup>2</sup>. "So also, says the apostle, is the resurrection of the dead." There may be a future embodiment for the spirit as much higher than the present as the spiritual world is beyond this material world, as well adapted to the uses of man's personality in a higher realm of existence as the present body is adapted to this, and as much surpassing our present body of flesh and blood as one star surpasses another star in splendor. "There is a spiritual body" (σῶμα πνευματικόν), a glorified corporeity, adapted to the spiritual world, as truly as there is "a natural body" (σῶμα ψυχικόν) adapted to our life in this world.<sup>3</sup> "Paul's Gospel is the gospel of the body as well as of the spirit. The whole personality is to be conserved and saved. No part of our life is to be discarded, but all is to be fulfilled and perfected. Salvation includes "the redemption of the body."<sup>4</sup> It is obvious that these considerations do not answer all the questions which it is natural to ask concerning the

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor 15:39

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 15:40-41

<sup>3</sup> 1Cor., 15:44

<sup>4</sup> Stevens: The Theology of the

New Testament. See also Rom., 8:23



subject. What the relation will be between the present body and that which is to be, Paul does not say. It is enough for him to know that it will be in the image of the glorified Christ.<sup>1</sup> It was enough for Paul to maintain a continuity of corporeal life.

How then, does Paul conceive of resurrection (ἀνάστασις)? What is raised, and from what is it raised? It is to be noticed that Paul does not speak of the resurrection of the body, and does not believe in a r e s u r r e c t i o c a r n i s . He always speaks about the resurrection of persons. It is the person who is raised and he rises from among the dead (ἐκ νεκρῶν),<sup>2</sup> that is, from the abode of the dead, conceived of by the Jewish mind as the underworld. For Paul, resurrection is neither resurrection of the body nor resurrection from the ground in which the body is buried, but is a rising of the personality from the realm of death into the realm of light and life, whereupon the spirit is clothed with its heavenly habitation.

Paul has not touched upon the numerous questions which speculation suggests. These questions did not concern him. His interest in the subject was entirely religious and practical. It was enough for him to know that Christ was

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor., 15:49

<sup>2</sup> Paul's phrases are ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, or τῶν νεκρῶν, and ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν. 1Cor., 15:12.13.21. Rom., 6:4~7~4.



the guaranty of a perfected life to come, that the believer should triumph over death, and attain his complete salvation in the fellowship and likeness of Christ.

Did Paul believe in an intermediate state? The answer is: Paul has not developed such a doctrine. Perhaps his neglect may have been due to his expectation that the parousia was near. On such a view the significance of an intermediate state would be greatly reduced. He describes Christians as entering at death into immediate fellowship with Christ.<sup>1</sup> How is this idea of perfected blessedness at death to be adjusted to the idea that the resurrection is a future eschatological event occurring in connection with the Lord's second coming? The apostle has furnished us with no means of answering this question.

Paul does not hold the conception of two resurrections, that of believers, and that of the rest of mankind, separated by a millennium or other period. The words: "The dead in Christ shall rise first"<sup>2</sup>, stand over against the words: "Then we that are alive shall be caught up"<sup>3</sup>. The correlatives πρῶτον and ἔπειτα here refer to the rising of the dead in Christ as a first event, to be followed next by the

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<sup>1</sup> 2Cor., 5:6-8; Phil., 1:23

<sup>2</sup> 1Thess., 4:16

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 4:16, 17





translation of believers, and contain no reference to a second resurrection. Some find the idea of two resurrections in the words: " Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end,"<sup>1</sup> etc., that is the end of the resurrection, i.e., the resurrection of non-christians. But this interpretation is improbable in view of the words which follow and which seem to explain "the end," namely: " When he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father"<sup>2</sup> " The end" most naturally refers to Christ's consummation of his kingdom, and denotes the termination of the present world-period, the goal of human history.

Whether Paul held that the resurrection will be universal or not, is a difficult and disputed question. In the Acts (24:15) he is described as asserting "a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." In his epistles he nowhere speaks of a resurrection of all mankind. The whole argument for the resurrection in 1Cor. 15. is based upon mystic union with Christ as its ground and guaranty and would be inapplicable to unbelievers. On the whole, it is probable that he assumed the resurrection of all men though

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor., 15:23, 24

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 15:24



in some different sense and with different accompaniments and conditions in the case of the righteous and in that of the wicked.

Paul's eschatology was the projection of Christian hope into the life beyond. The form of this hope was not a little affected by the views of the future life in which he had been trained. Paul was certain that God would judge the world in righteousness<sup>1</sup>, and that a blessed and perfected life awaited the Christian. Paul wrote not with a view to satisfying speculative thought, but with the hope of fostering and strengthening the Christian faith and hope.

We close with the words of Auguste Sabatier.

"It must be clearly understood that Paul was no philosopher of the schools. The purpose or wish to construct a system, properly so called, was wholly foreign to his mind. He was a missionary, who brought everything to bear upon his work. He learned by teaching. In every crisis of his life he looked for guidance from God. The solution of difficult questions he sought in prayer; and the answer came sometimes like a flash of light, sometimes as the result of profound meditation, but was always regarded by him as a Divine inspiration. He studied events, he re-

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<sup>1</sup> Acts, 17:31



flected upon past experiences; he profited by his travels and his reading. Everything, in short, furnished him with food for thought, and with opportunities of discovering the practical or theoretical issues of the faith that he incessantly preached."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by S.D.F. Salmond, The Christian doctrine of Immortality., p. 500.





### Chapter III

#### Immortality in modern Christian thought.

##### I.

The theology of the past undertook to demonstrate the immortality of the soul by conclusive speculative argument: the soul is a simple substance, an immaterial entity, hence indiscerptible, incorruptible, imperishable, spiritual, immortal. But in our own day we can no longer take belief in immortality for granted. Multitudes of people - even religious people - have lost the old, unquestioning faith in a life-after death. Even where the fact is not denied, it is no longer confidently affirmed. It remains at most a possibility, a hope; no longer a definite and assured conviction. What are the reasons for such a sudden and far-reaching change?

The rise of the critical philosophy has discredited the realistic metaphysics which furnished the theoretical



foundation of the traditional view of natural immortality. In the enlarged universe which modern science has brought to light, it seems presumptuous to single out so insignificant a creature as man for endless existence. Again, the increased prominence of the social ideal seems to many to render the fate of the individual a matter of subordinate importance; and in the service of the community and the race they find compensation for the loss of faith in the personal survival of death. Add to these the prevalence of an agnosticism which despairs of knowledge of any kind that goes beyond present experience, and it is not difficult to understand the reasons for the present eclipse of immortality.

Yet the causes which first led to the rise of the belief still exist and are bound in time to make themselves felt. Still man is conscious of capacities and ideals for which the brief span of this present life admits no satisfaction. Still the sense of justice cries out for some adjustment of the inequalities which are so painfully manifest in the lot of men. Still the religious experience warrants hope that the communion which now exists between the soul and God is prophetic of larger fellowship to come. The enlarged view of the universe may serve to exalt, as well as to belittle, the significance of the being who is apparently



its highest product. The self-forgetfulness and devotion engendered by modern social service render the lives of those who exemplify them not less but more worthy of continuance. The breaking down of a crude philosophy but prepares the way for a larger conception of existence, in which the spiritual capacities and experiences to which Christianity witnesses may find their home.

Under these influences we see the beginnings of a new effort to lay a rational basis for the doctrine of immortality. In the following pages we are to direct our attention to the way in which 1) Psychology and 2) Philosophy help us to deepen a hope in immortality.

## II

Psychology has raised some very difficult problems with regard to immortality. How is consciousness, how is personal activity, to continue when death has rendered nerve-tissue no longer capable of the phisico-chemical functioning essential to psychical activity?

This is one of the two difficulties which William James tries to meet in his Ingersoll on Immortality Lecture. The problem is relative to the absolute dependence of our spiritual life upon the brain. One hears not only physio-





logists, but numbers of those who read the popular science books and magazines asking: How can we believe in life hereafter when Science has once for all succeeded in proving, beyond the possibility of doubt, that our inner life is a function of the "gray matter" in the cerebral convolutions of the brain? How can the function possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay? James undertakes to answer this as follows: Thought is a function of the brain; therefore no brain, no thought. Does the conclusion follow? It does, James answers, if we are bound to regard the function in question as necessarily productive. The man who thinks thus, says James "thinks of the matter just as he thinks when he says, "Steam is a function of the tea-kettle", "Light is a function of the electric circuit," "power is a function of the moving waterfall." In such cases the several material objects are suffered to have the function of inwardly creating or engendering their effects, and their function must be called productive function. Just so, one concludes, it must be with the brain-engendering consciousness in its relation to the soul's life. The brain must also be a productive function. Of course, if such production be the function of the brain, then when the organ perishes, since the production can no longer continue, the soul must surely die. Such a conclusion as



this is indeed inevitable from that particular conception of the facts.<sup>1</sup>

But we are not compelled to regard this function of the brain as productive. In the world of physical nature productive function is not the only kind of function with which we are familiar. We have, says James, also releasing or permissive function; and we have transmissive function. The trigger of a cross-bow functions releasingly; colored glass, a prism, a refracting lens, functions transmissively. The psycho-physiologist has forgotten to read his Shelley:

"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,

Stains the white radiance of Eternity."

So, concludes James, "when we think of the law that thought is a function of the brain, we are not required to think of productive function only; we are entitled also to consider permissive or transmissive function. And this the ordinary psycho-physiologist leaves out of his account."<sup>2</sup>

"Suppose," he says, "that the whole universe of material things.... should turn out to be a mere surface-veil of phenomena, hiding and keeping back the world of genuine realities. Such a supposition is foreign neither to common

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<sup>1</sup> Human Immortality, p. 12f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 15.



sense nor to philosophy. Common sense believes in realities behind the veil even too superstitiously; and idealistic philosophy declares the whole world of natural experience, as we get it, to be but a time-mask, shattering or refracting the one infinite Thought which is the sole reality into those millions of finite streams of consciousness know to us as our private selves..... Suppose, now, that this were really so, and suppose, moreover, that the dome, opaque enough at all times to the full super-solar blaze, could at certain times and places grow less so, and let certain beams pierce through into this sublunary world. These beams would be so many finite rays, so to speak, of consciousness, and they would vary in quantity and quality as the opacity varied in degree..... gleams, however finite and unsatisfying, of the absolute life of the universe, are from time to time vouchsafed. Glows of feeling, glimpses of insight, and streams of knowledge and perception float into our finite world.

Admit now that our brains are such thin and half-transparent places in the veil. What will happen? Why, as the white radiance comes through the dome, with all sorts of straining and distortion imprinted on it by the glass,...  
 .... so the genuine matter of reality, the life of souls as it is in its fulness, will break through our several brains





into this world in all sorts of restricted forms, and with all the imperfections and queernesses that characterize our finite individualities here below.

According to the state in which the brain finds itself, the barrier of its obstructiveness may also be supposed to rise or fall. It sinks so low, when the brain is in full activity, that a comparative flood of spiritual energy pours over. At other times, only such occasional waves of thought as heavy sleep permits get by. And when finally a brain stops acting altogether, or decays, that special stream of consciousness which it subserved will vanish entirely from this natural world. But the sphere of being that supplied the consciousness would still be intact; and in that more real world with which, even whilst here, it was continuous, the consciousness might, in ways unknown to us, continue still. You see that, on all these suppositions, our soul's life, as we here know it, would none the less in literal strictness be the function of the brain. The brain would be the independent variable, the mind would vary dependently on it. But such dependence on the brain for this natural life would in no wise make immortal life impossible.....<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion to which James arrives is important, because

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<sup>1</sup> Human Immortality, p. 15. ff.

To understand the relation between mind and brain I include





it makes us see the fallacy of Moleschott's often-quoted aphorism. "(No thought without phosphorus!" But James has

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the note which William James adds, (p. 50ff). "..... Now, on the dualistic assumption, one cannot see more than two really different sorts of dependence of our mind on our brain: Either 1) The brain brings into being the very stuff of consciousness of which our mind consists; or else 2) consciousness preexists as an entity, and the various brains give to it its various special forms. If supposition 2 be the true one, and the stuff of mind preexists, there are, again, only two ways of conceiving that our brain confers upon it the specifically human form. It may exist a) In disseminated particles; and then our brains are organs of concentration, organs for combining and massing these into resultant minds of personal form. Or it may exist b) in vaster unities (absolute "world-soul", or something less); and then our brains are organs for separating it into parts and giving them finite form. There are thus three possible theories of the brain's function, and no more. We may name them, severally, - 1) The theory of production. 2) The theory of combination; 3) The theory of separation."



shewed that not only does the organism condition the self, but the self conditions the life of the organism; and this conditioning and ultimate control of organism by self, rather than the domination of self by the organism, becomes more and more marked as we pass from the level of instinct to the level of a moralized experience.

Psychological thinking strengthens faith in the continuation of personal life. To show the truth of this statement I will mention two things which are worthy of attention.

1) The control of mind over organic process, which is increasingly evident at certain levels of human experience, points to the growing independence of mind and to the possibility of the self surviving the organism.

2) The capacity of the self to organize experience increasingly in terms of the higher social values points to the possibility of the self surviving the organism.

Let us consider the first of these. The last decade or two has witnessed the recognition of a range of facts which indicate a real influence of mind upon the bodily processes. For a long time "mind cure" was treated with contempt by the current scientific thought. But psychology has insisted upon taking "mind cure" and "faith cure" seriously, with the result that psychotherapy, or cure through the



bringing about of favorable mental states by suggestion, is now scientifically recognized as the best treatment in certain kinds of disease. There are diseases like neurasthenia, where the physical condition of extreme weariness and weakness is now regarded by physicians as secondary, the result of primary conditions which are mental. Grief, severe disappointment, anxiety over business, fear - these and many other mental states have been found to exert a powerful influence upon the functions of the body. The cure of those physical disorders which have resulted from mental states clearly lies in the changing of the mental state, not in the use of drugs and chemicals.

But, more significant is the way in which mind as it develops, acquires an increasing control of the organism. At first, movement is reflex and instinctive. The "set" of the nervous system at birth governs the capacity for movement. But with the passage of the years this is reversed and more or less of real power of initiative is developed. In the higher forms, this power of initiative is genuinely creative.

Professor Francis L. Strickland in his "Psychology of Religious Experience" argues, that "in the acts of will we have the outstanding instances of control of organism by mind. This control runs all the way from a modification





of instinctive and habitual reactions or the conscious suspension of reflexes to the full autonomy of the self. An example of this latter would be such an act as that of a steamboat captain who, though surrounded with flames, sticks to his post in order to beach his vessel, or when heroic men on the ill-fated Titanic helped others into the boats and quietly decided to go down with the ship.... When we consider the way in which human life becomes moralized and the self gains emancipation from the domination of the body, does it not make it easier to believe in the possibility of a life of the self without organic conditions as we know them in this life?"<sup>1</sup>

The wellknown psychologist William McDougall, in a chapter entitled "Psychology and the Thought of God", speaks of four forms of experience which to him seem to afford some direct support to the theistic hypothesis. He says: "I hold that what is known as telepathic communication is reasonably well established as an occasional occurrence; that is to say, that under conditions not yet definable, one human mind does sometimes influence or communicate with another in some way which science utterly fails to make intelligible. It may be that there is involved some subtle physical medium

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<sup>1</sup> p 306.



of communication; but in view of the fact that many instances of seeming telepathy have occurred between persons widely separated in space, it is very difficult to accept any such hypothesis (however plausible it may seem for instances occurring between persons at close quarters). We seem driven to postulate a mode of communication that is independent of spatial conditions and depends only upon mental conditions. If this conclusion were fully and indisputably established, it would at once give strong support to that view of prayer which regards it, not merely as a process of personal expression and refreshment, as self-suggestion or soothing contemplation and encouraging reflection, but as a process of communication between one Spirit and another in some super-physical fashion. And a supplementary deduction would be the human mind's relative independence of the bodily organization, and hence support for the view that Mind in general is not closely tied to, or strictly limited in its operations by, any physical conditions."<sup>1</sup>

J. Malcolm Bird, a psychic research expert, says in a chapter entitled "Psychical research, science and Religion: " I think it probable that ultimately we shall decide that some of the phenomena of psychical research are best covered

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<sup>1</sup> Has Science discovered God? edited by Edward H. Cotton, p.153f.



by a spiritistic hypothesis, which must then subsist side-by-side with the psychological one..... If so, then we shall have to have a philosophy of biological life which gives the human animal something to survive with, a universe which gives us a place to survive into, and a covering of cosmic philosophy that recognizes all this as an aspect of reality. If the necessity arises it will be met, and in that event we shall be able in obvious truth to say that science and religion have come together."<sup>1</sup>

### III

But we must proceed to our second consideration, which is that the capacity of the self to organize experience increasingly in terms of the higher social values points to the possibility of the self surviving the physical organism.

And first of all there is the high valuation of personality which characterizes every adequate interpretation of human experience. Here appears a man's appraisal of himself and of other selves. Christ taught us to think of our fellow men as of supreme worth. The highest value in human life is personality. Now, faith that personal consciousness

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1 Has Science discovered God? edited by Edward H. Cotton, p.292f.





outlasts the physical organism is from one point of view simply our confidence that the highest value of our human existence, namely, our own conscious selfhood, is a permanent value.

But recognition of human selfhood as the supreme value carries with it a like valuation of other persons. For it is only out of contact with other selves that our own selfhood emerges and develops. The fact of fellowship is basic to all our experience. For life at its best is woven not out of food getting and self-preservation and sex and play, but out of those emotions and attitudes and sentiments named admiration, reverence, gratitude, sympathy, friendship, and love. And fellowship, emerging from the merely instinctive satisfaction of being together, develops until it becomes those strong loyalties which lift human social relations far above the level of animal life. These loyalties are not merely intensifications of personal attachment but involve also an acknowledgment of the great ethical values like justice and righteousness which are fundamental to the social order. Thus our conviction of the permanent worth of these great social values of our human experience, as we discover that worth in social relations, makes it difficult to believe that in the death of the physical organism there comes the end of all the values which life



with our fellow men has enabled us to realize.

But here there comes the question: Are values essentially of and for persons? Can we say: no persons, no values? And, if so, does not the recognition that values are genuine, eternal aspects and elements of a real universe, involve the necessity of viewing personality in a similar way? That is to say, in affirming the eternal reality of value, are we correspondingly bound to affirm the eternal reality and significance of the individual person? Let us deal with this problem of Personality and Immortality more closely.

Our study of the nature of personality has led us to one of the most ancient problems of philosophy. Pre-Socratic speculation was in the main a naturalistic undertaking; the early physiologers sought to understand nature and to analyze its factual properties. The dissatisfaction with their divergent results found expression in the rampant individualism and the anarchy of the Sophists. In his opposition to the physiologers the Sophist challenged the possibility of Science; his own doctrine asserted the futility of philosophy. From this double peril Socrates saved human thought by his teaching that virtue is knowledge: virtue is no mere liking or fashion or convention; it is practical evidence of wisdom, of insight into nature and human nature. And knowledge is possible, Socrates in effect declared, provided



you recognize that it is not apprehension of an unstable external world, but insight and conviction, active participation in an ideal process. Knowledge is virtue.

The fuller meaning of the Socratic dictum is revealed in Plato's synthesis of ethics and metaphysics. The real world is a scale of eternal principles made known to reason and culminating in the Idea of the Good. Real knowledge of the world-process, therefore, meant to Plato a recognition of it as a ladder to Perfection. Man's ascent of this ladder is a rise in virtue as well as a growth in wisdom; intellectual and moral advance are not separate, but condition each other. Virtue is knowledge; the highest goal of practice is the ultimate object of theory; ethics and metaphysics are one. The exaltation of this idea is the theme of the Symposium; its systematic development and its application to the problem of immortality are undertaken in the Republic and in the Phaedo as we have seen. But the criticism of Plato's philosophy centered in his doctrine of substance, the relation of reality to appearance, his account of the empirical order. In this criticism Plato's exaltation of value as fundamental to reality did not receive the sort of attention that it deserved. It needed that twenty centuries should pass before due attention would be given to Plato's conception of value. The modern discussion of the





metaphysics of value derives mainly from Kant. How are God, Freedom, and Immortality to be understood and estimated by a philosophy that remains loyal to science? Kant met this issue, with his doctrine of the Primacy of Practical Reason; but the development of this doctrine into a systematic philosophy of value has remained a task for his successors. Modern discussion since Kant has proceeded along various lines; it has sought to analyze the judgment of value and to explain it psychologically; it has undertaken a survey and a tabulation of the whole field of values. Lotze, going back to Plato, has undertaken to rank value above fact and to demonstrate that "the whole sum of Nature can be nothing else than the condition for the realization of Good" and that "the true source of the life of science is to be found.....in showing how absolutely universal is the extent and at the same time how completely subordinate the significance of the mission which mechanism has to fulfil in the structure of the world."<sup>1</sup>

In its insistence on the recognition of the metaphysical importance of value, contemporary idealism is expressing in philosophical terms the essential demand of all religion.

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<sup>1</sup> Microcosmus, Vol. I., pp. XVI, 396, quoted by Tsanoff  
in The problem of Immortality, p.381.



Religion is faith in the supremacy and in the ultimate conservation and enhancement of value.<sup>1</sup> Sacrifice, ritual, prayer, devotion, mysticism: these are but varied expressions of this fundamental conviction. Belief in God is belief that Worth is supreme in the Universe; and the evolution of religion is the evolution of man's ideas of worth. In philosophy, recognition of value has concentrated attention on the cosmic importance of personality. The life of the spirit, looms large in the idealistic view of reality, for that life is the preeminent expression of value in the world that we know. Keenly alive to the cardinal fact of worth in the universe, the idealist has been unable to dismiss persons, the distinctive bearers of worth. Only in man and in man's spiritual activity has the world begun to realize the full measure of its possibilities. In man nature has found itself, has found worth, dignity, finality-through-aspiration. "Man", says Professor Tsanoff, "is a spiritual being, but we must nowise fail to appreciate the real meaning of "spiritual." Spirit does not mean immaterial substance any more than it means material substance. "Spirit" connotes not substance but process, and not process in general but non-mechanical process, self-conscious,

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<sup>1</sup> Höffding, *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 10ff., 215ff.



self-enhancing, worth-expressing, conative, creative, aspiring process."<sup>1</sup> Our personality is the evidence and guaranty of immortality. We are not going to perish, but somehow to persist and to continue to be personally active. How? How is our continued identity to be assured beyond death's portal? How is it to be conceived? If we face this question fairly we may be able to rid ourselves of, much error and confusion at this point. This must be understood, that our identity is not an identity of material, a sameness of structure. The doctrine of the resurrection was needed not so much to provide the same identical bodily frame, as to supply the bodily medium believed to be indispensable to the soul's adequate functioning. So we as human beings, have ever been troubled, as to how we could be immortal ourselves unless we were in a position to remember that we were ourselves, and how continuance of memory and consequent self-recognition were to be possible despite the dissolution of our cerebro-neural store-house of ideas. Our mistake has been to think of our bodily and mental apparatus as our personality.

But our identity is not an identity of material or of structure. Persistence of the personality cannot mean the continuous existence of the same combination of organic

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<sup>1</sup> The Problem of Immortality, p. 350:





or cerebroneural or psychic factors, nor the permanence of any soul-kernel. The older metaphysics sought to demonstrate personal immortality by insisting on the simplicity of the soul-substance. Kant disposed once for all of this mode of reasoning, and recent scientific progress has only strengthened Kant's main position." Spiritualistic atomism can secure personal immortality as little as materialistic atomism can preclude it."<sup>1</sup>

The story is told of Emerson that he was once approached by an excited person with the startling announcement, "Mr. Emerson, the world is coming to an end on the tenth day of the coming month at midnight." "Oh, well", replied Emerson "let it come, we can get along without it."<sup>2</sup>

Personality is not a structure at all, stable or unstable. It is a system of values ever distinctive and unique; therein is its individual; that precisely is its true simplicity.

This point should not elude us. The value-character of the universe is expressed in us, in a manner which is nowise duplicable. In the realm of value alone is true individuality possible. The mortal insult to a person is just this: to have his unique distinctive worth ignored by being re-

<sup>1</sup> Tsanoff. The Problem of Immortality p.367.

<sup>2</sup> J.W.Buckham, Personality and the Christian Ideal, p. 234.



garded as a certain specimen of a certain class. Therein is the legal judgment of a man's life abstract and inadequate; the individual, the true person is not to be simply classified under a category. The true person is ever unique, and the attainment of a fuller measure of irreplaceable distinctive worth is just what we mean by the growth of personality: finding, discovering oneself, getting one's spiritual stride. This does not mean that individuality implies utter exclusiveness and alienation. Quite the contrary; the more a man enters the life of others, the richer becomes his own life. In this is God's life the richest, that in Him we all live and move and have our being; farthest from being exclusive, God's being is immanent in us all and ours in Him. It is obvious that persons, great and small, are inter-related; they commune, share language and every medium of communication. But notwithstanding common speech each one has his own message.

Personality is ever unique; yet it is characterized also by solidarity; it is never fragmentary; in its every moment the whole is uttered. In the realm of values the whole is not the sum of its parts. The whole is here complete in each part, and each part transcends the whole, for in each part the whole is transcending itself. Personality is not to be dissolved or preserved fragmentarily; it ever advances



full-front. There can be no fragments, or aspects, or elements of the real concrete person. Personality is monadic; it is a miniature universe.

Thus value is expressed and constituted in persons, richly various and ever unique; and only in the permanence of persons is value to be conserved. Now if each of us is essentially a unity of values, then his continued career must have the same character.

Realizing now that each is an individualized devotion to ideals, a pursuer of values, charged with inexhaustible potencies in aspiration, what is he to be in the future? The answer to this question is, that same and no other: that is to be his destiny. But how can we be personally active outside the medium of our body? "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be", writes St. John,<sup>1</sup> and St. Paul writes. "We know in part."<sup>2</sup> Even in this brief life it is scarcely possible to anticipate in detail the career of a person, and predict how he will turn out. Much more so, in the larger life.

#### IV

In the light of what has been said about personality what is the meaning and place of death? We have dared to

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1 1John, 3:2

2 1Cor., 13:12





call death an incident, an accident; such it is with respect to its time and manner. And yet in relation to the progress of personality, the death of the body may have a very real part to play in the development of the soul. "It resembles one of the critical points in science", writes Dr. Buckham, "such as that at which water passes into the vapor state, or one species into another in the progress of evolution."<sup>1</sup>

"Change and perishability exist," says William T. Harris, interpreting Aristotle, "because the particular is not adequate to the universal." "The particular - that is the physical body - is not adequate to the universal, - that is the spirit, the personality. What, then, could be expected but the sundering of the universal from the outgrown particular? Dumbly we look on and imagine that the universal has gone down with the particular, the soul with the body. "Foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die."<sup>2</sup>

"But why, if death introduces the spirit to its next stage of development, does it come so inopportunately with most men, before the self has reached its full development in this stage of its progress? Because death as an event,

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<sup>1</sup> Personality and the Christian Ideal, p. 239

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 240



a particular occurrence, belongs to the empirical order, - an order which personality can influence and use, but cannot wholly control..... Are these two orders, then - the eternal and the empirical, - alien and opposing? .....

The two orders are on different planes. The relation between them is that which we find epitomized in the relation of the person to the brain. The natural order serves the eternal order, yet it has a relative independence. The person must realize himself by subduing and informing the empirical world."<sup>1</sup> Why this should be so, we cannot fully understand. But that is true which centuries ago Socrates said to his disciples a little before he escaped from the bondage of the visible and physical into that atmosphere of pure insight wherein immortality becomes real:

"Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἄρα, τὸ ἀειδὲς, τὸ εἰς τοιοῦτον τόπον ἕτερον οἰχόμενον γενναῖον καὶ καθαρὸν καὶ ἀειδῆ, εἰς Ἄιδου ὡς ἀληθῶς, παρὰ τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φρόνιμον θεόν, οἷ, ἂν θεὸς ἐθέλῃ, αὐτίκα καὶ τῇ ἐμῇ ψυχῇ ἰτέον, αὕτη δὲ δὴ ἡμῖν ἡ τοιαύτη καὶ οὕτω πεφυκυῖα ἀπαλλαττομένη τοῦ σώματος εὐφύς διαπεφύσεται καὶ ἀπόλωλεν, ὥς φασιν οἱ πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι; πολλὰ γε δεῖ."

" Is the soul, then, the invisible, that which departs

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1. Personality and the Christian Ideal, p. 240



into a place of like nature with itself, noble, and pure, and invisible, into that which is Hades in good earnest, near the good and wise god whither, if god will, my own soul too must soon depart, is this soul of ours, I say, being such in itself and in its nature, on its released from the body straightway likely to be dissipated and destroyed as the multitude say? Far from it."<sup>1</sup>

## V

This is, then, the sure foundation upon which our faith in immortality is based. We are persons and therefore immortal. This sense that we are persons is inseparably bound up with the implicit recognition of the Supreme Person, from whom Personality gets its very meaning and existence. Only in defining oneself in relation to this Perfect Person does the imperfect person realize fully his character, his worth, his immortality. Jesus suggested the intimate relation between the existence of God and the continued existence of the soul when he said, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" The relation which true persons hold to God is an abiding relation. Only in reference to Him do persons live at all; and since He is a Li-

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<sup>1</sup> Phaedo, XXIX, D.





ving God, they remain living persons. "Without God there could be no immortality, for it is imparted to men by Him with the impartation of personality itself."<sup>1</sup>

We must bear in mind that the need which immortality meets is not simply that of permanence, but of fulfilment; not the preservation of the thing that is, but the completion of that which is yet to be.

Prof. J E. Boodin in his book "Cosmic Evolution" says: "There is in us the impulse for immortality. There is the consciousness of the unfinished task, of the larger creative destiny. We cannot see our place in the infinite future. But we must work in faith for the promise. We must have faith that the creative Providence which has led us hitherto with infinite care and pain is not playing an idle game, cannot be permanently defeated in its striving."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus Christ has revealed to us within ourselves, and in others, capacities which require another life for their full expression.

And now if we are to make belief in immortality a living issue to those who for the moment have lost it, we must begin by making them feel that life here is so significant that it deserves to go on. There are people who

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<sup>1</sup> J.W. Buckham, Personality and the Christian Ideal, p.237

<sup>2</sup> P. 468.



esteem life cheaply and feel that its continuance is undesirable. The only remedy for them is the complete transformation of personality which Christianity makes possible for those who put their trust in Christ. They will recover their faith in immortality when they have recovered their faith in life. All turns on the answer we give to the question: What does it mean to be a person in the Christian sense? Is it simply to be a centre through which for a brief period the forces of the universe make themselves felt, or has the individual man or woman an independent value for God? Is personality the subject of a creative experience - an experience in which new insights are won and genuine values brought into existence? If it is, then it is reasonable for us to desire its continuance, for there is nothing else in the universe comparable to it in value.

God is the central fact in the Christian's universe, whether the part of it we see here, or the other larger part which lies beyond our sight. We long to live, not simply for the joy of living, but that we may worthily fill our place in the immortal company whom God, our Father, is fitting for his fellowship. Whether here or there, life is all of a piece. Death, - without this promise the last and most deadly of our enemies - because the assassin



of life, - becomes the greatest of the sacraments; the portal through which we pass: to new adventure as we join the innumerable company of every age and name and race who find in communion with the living God and in their doing of his will their peace, their happiness, and their fulfilment.

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;  
 Thou madest man, he knows not why  
 He thinks he was not made to die;  
 And thou hast made him, thou art just."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, In memoriam, Pro. 9





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